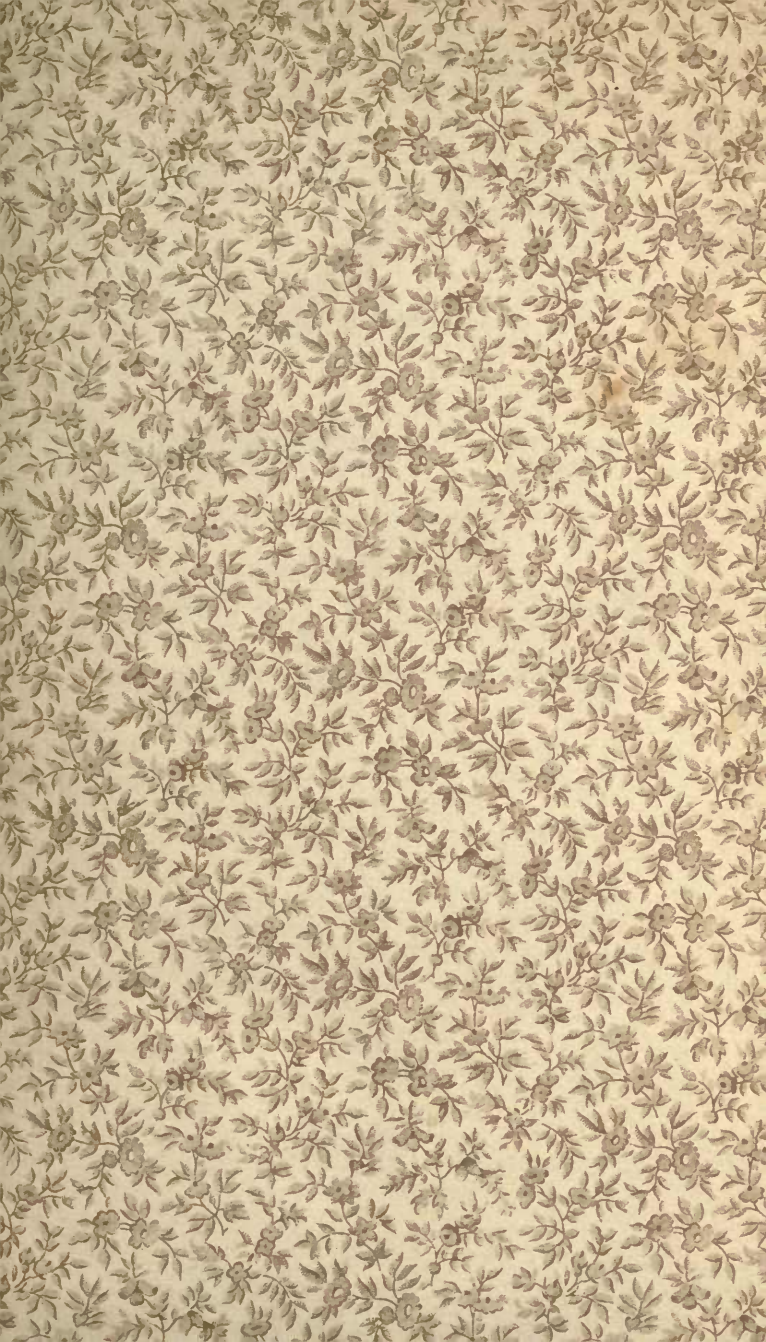


MADONNA HALL







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MADONNA HALL,

THE STORY OF

OUR COUNTRY'S PERIL,

BY

EMILY CLEMENS PEARSON.

AUTHOR OF:

"PRINCE PAUL," "OUR PARISH," "THE POOR WHITE,"
"RUTH'S SACRIFICE" AND "FROM COTTAGE
TO CASTLE."

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∴ TO MY COUNTRY ∴

*Planted of God; Asylum of the nations:
may He bless Thy loyal people, and rebuke
those who are not loyal. May the grace of
governing in righteousness abound with thee,
that none under thy shelter traitorously succeed
in disarming thee, and conveying this God-
given heritage to a foreign usurper. . . .*

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MADONNA HALL.

I.

U. Diplomatic Investment.

A CASTLE on an elevated site, reached by a winding drive-way through well-kept grounds, was the edifice called "Madonna Hall."

Arbors, fountains, groves, grottos, shrines, statues, shrubbery and flowers adorned the surrounding park.

The queen of this establishment, Clarissima Buhler, was young, comely, accomplished, unlearned, and persistent. She was sometimes styled "Little Mother," not from her size, but from lack of advanced years.

One morning tidings came, which put her in a flutter of excitement, not unmingled with grief. Her father was dead, and she would now, as she was principal heir, come in possession of a large property.

Bishop Berlin had been chosen administrator, and was also her guardian. He was under forty, noble looking, cultured, dignified, and lived an irreproachable life. On hearing the news, the Bishop left his palace, and called on the Superioress Clarissima.

“Good morning, my lord bishop,” she cried, as she met him in the parlor, and grasped his hand. “My poor father is dead, and my property is to be cared for.”

“Your property, little mother?” with a gleam of surprise in his fine eyes, and a ready smile. “I thought you gave it to this convent when you took the veil.”

“Yes, I remember. But as I am superioress, I must have special rights; and you’ll see that I have all the money I want, I’m sure.”

“Certainly,” was the genial reply. “Although it is against our rules, I shall take great pleasure in making an exception in your favor, to a reasonable extent.”

“Thank you ever so much,” with a beaming face. “I knew you would, you are always so kind and just.”

“I shall, however,” he added, with dignity, “be pleased to have you advise with me about the disposal of what I may, from time to time, restore you from your father’s estate.”

“All right. I don’t mind telling you, since you are bishop. You will see that I am reasonable.

Do you know, my lord, that I sometimes envy you?"

"Envy me, little mother? What can you find in me to envy?" exclaimed he, in great astonishment.

"When I see you driving with those elegant horses, I want to drive, too. I must have horses of my own. You appear in good style, why should not I?" said the impetuous little woman.

"Great Hercules!" he cried. "What are we coming to? You want a span!" Then after a pause: "You shall have your wish. Have you any horses in view?"

"Indeed, I have," replied the lady, excitedly. "I know just what beauties I want. I have long been on the lookout whenever driving in the one-horse carriage, and when in town, and I most admire Senator Southbury's handsome bays that he brought on from Washington. You know that he drove into our grounds in grand style, when he came for his niece, Ella Southbury. I was really so taken with those horses that I scarcely noticed her going away. And they have the funniest names! One is called 'Tucky Ho,' and the other 'Kentuck.' I hear they are for sale."

"Ah," cautiously rejoined the bishop, "I am afraid they are not safe. Col. Southbury told me a day or two ago that they were so gay that it was a tiresome job to drive them."

"I'll risk them," was the lively reply. "Your

nephew, Hosea Berlin, can manage any horses. I do enjoy being borne along by a dashing span, when sure that the driver has them in control. Besides, you must see that it is a practical investment, as this is half academy and half convent. The Protestant girls are always taken with show and parade, and I expect to get recruits for our ranks by my attractive turnout."

The bishop laughed heartily at the lady's purpose to enjoy her drives, and at the same time turn them to practical account, saying, approvingly,—

"What a diplomatic manager you are getting to be!"

Certain it was, that she had managed her father as to the disposal of the bulk of his estate, having been permitted by the bishop to see him often, and keep his interest alive in the convent with which she was connected, the exception being made in her favor for this purpose. She was also allowed her urgent request to retain her name.

She had been her father's pet from babyhood, and as it was known that she had a large inheritance coming to her, she reigned as a very queen at Madonna Hall.

Her brother, Herr Buhler, became a priest, and was pastor of St. Gabriel's church. Her only sister, Madame Josephine Du Pont, a widow, lapsed a little from Rome, connected herself with a ritualistic church, and had charge of a sectarian young ladies'

school. Hosea Berlin, the bishop's relative, was agent, steward and coachman at Madonna Hall, and was so useful that the thought of his leaving could not be endured by Mother Clarissima ; so she paid him a good salary, and commended whatever he did. He was manly, upright and intelligent ; had been educated in the public schools and commercial college, and remained where he was, not for pay, or because he was well pleased with the situation, but for other and weightier reasons.

While negotiating the bargain, Senator Southbury wrote the bishop to send Hosea down to Belleville, his place in the suburbs of an inland city, and he would drive back with him, and show him how he managed the horses. Accordingly, the steward took cars for Belleville, and was promptly on hand at the time appointed.

The senator had in his care two young ladies, family connections, who had been visiting in Belleville, and who were returning to relatives and friends at Byington mansion, in the city of his destination ; these were Grace Leavenworth and Florence Fairfax, who had seats given them in the senator's carriage, and were by themselves, as the gentlemen sat with the driver, to guide in the management of the horses.

While on the way, the two friends chatted in a lively strain of the handsome steeds, of the charming scenery, and then of school life, and of what was before them.

Formerly playmates, they had been very differently trained in the intervening years, were unlike in culture and life-plans, and yet from old associations were attached to each other. Grace was recently from a New England college, and Florence from Madame Du Pont's seminary.

Mrs. Byington, who was to be their hostess, was Miss Leavenworth's aunt, and a distant connection of Colonel Southbury, for he also had a military title.

Grace Leavenworth was a type of the efficient American girl in intelligence and self-reliant courage. She was noble and unselfish in every sense of the word, had a lovely face and winning ways, the outcome of her kindly heart, which was modelled after her mother, who "allured to noble deeds, and led the way."

Florence had plain features, but was not aware of her lack of beauty, although ever studying the art of adornment, as if to supply some possible deficiency. Under defective training, she had become thoughtless and ready to live for self alone. She had graduated from a branch of Madonna Hall, of which Madame Du Pont was principal. Although vain and frivolous, she had good impulses, and when alone with Grace, was a subservient friend; in company she lost sight of her, unless she could make her available, and add to her laurels. Even her easy school tasks had been tiresome, and she rejoiced to be at large, and free

from restraint. As the gay steeds bore them on, in the course of the conversation, she exclaimed,—

“How delightful it is, Grace, to have plenty of time to visit and travel! Are n't you glad that you are educated at last?”

“Educated!” replied Grace, “I do not know what the sensation is; I have only just commenced my education. It is a life-work with me.”

“Grace Leavenworth, you are really learned, while I am not; yet I am educated. I stick to that. You ought to have heard Madame Du Pont give us her parting charge as she bade us adieu. She said with great impressment, ‘Young ladies, I must congratulate you on having finished your education;’ and she looked so sweet that we girls were more in love with her than ever.”

“If I may be allowed to criticise, her remark was a little premature. Is she well educated herself?” asked Grace.

“She is graceful and accomplished in a society sense,” replied Florence, “but would be shocked at the idea of being learned. She says Arch-bishop Fenelon, author of ‘Telemachus,’ taught that true lady-like delicacy was almost as much spoiled by learning as by vice.”

“A thought worthy of the dark ages alone!” exclaimed Grace, spiritedly.

“And Madame quoted from another French writer, ‘The woman who thinks, is like the man who puts on rouge — ridiculous.’”

"How absurd," laughed Grace. "I never dreamed that a teacher of this day could manage to be so far behind the times. 'Incompetent to teach,' an educational board would style her."

"But Madame is a wonderful teacher," persisted Florence. "She knows what she is about. Her great aim has been to make us accomplished ladies, to be admired in society. Dress, manners, and the ornamental branches, with just enough of the common studies and of the catechism, are the grand substance of her course."

"She would scarcely make a college professor," observed Grace, smilingly.

"That isn't her aim in life," replied Florence. "She cares nothing for musty colleges and dry books; they cannot make a society belle nor a *religieuse*. For myself, I choose society life, and have all the education I shall ever use. Strangely enough, your college course does not seem to spoil you. You manage to be stylish, popular and lovely, all in the same breath, without effort."

"Now you are looking at me through magnifying spectacles," brightly said Grace.

"I admire you, for you have what I lack," replied Florence; and yet she was well pleased with herself, and even vain.

"If there is a difference," sincerely said Grace, "it must be owing to our training."

"Nothing would tempt me to be drilled as you

have been," said Florence. "But outside of schools you are a genius at fitting up a miracle of a bonnet from vapory lace, ribbon and flowers, while I am the slave of my milliner, for I must have a new head piece almost every month."

"I make mine last longer than that," rejoined Grace, in her lively way. "I would not like to spend too much time on making my bonnets, there are so many other more important things to be done. I have in mind an enterprise that I do so much want to see made a great success."

"A secret, is it?" asked Florence. "Well, I am all ready to hear, and I may aid you, if there isn't too much work. I hate that, and do not want care; so what am I good for, except it be to entertain company? How different we are! You are not the least of a coquette, while I glory in it that I am; and do you know that I have decided to demolish 'Cousin Gus' as my next conquest?"

Grace laughed at this unexpected announcement.

"You'll see that I am in earnest. I shall captivate him, just for fun."

"Cousin Gus" was a rising young minister, no way related to the young lady.

"How can you be so cruel!" exclaimed Grace, in mock alarm. "What if he is susceptible to the society of ladies?"

"Oh, I am sure that he is! and I intend to take advantage of it. Plodding book-worm! What does

he know of human nature? It is high time I took him in hand," and she laughed merrily at the idea.

Grace was amused at her friend's small talk, and knew that Mr. Cameron's noble life-purpose, good sense and ready tact would shield him well from her attacks, no matter how skilfully planned.

Mr. Cameron was, besides, unknown to Florence, from early years an admirer of Grace, although not in favor with her ambitious father, who could not endure that his daughter should "wed a poor gentleman."

"You may be building an air-castle," replied Grace, a little mischievously. "What if he is engaged?"

"I never heard that he was," gaily replied Florence, "and I know that he has heart and eyes for something besides books. Grace Leavenworth, you'll think me vain, but I fancy that he is smitten with me. I have certainly made an impression. Why, he even asked me if I would like to go to China as a missionary. That's one way of asking me to marry him."

Grace was silent, and did not answer for surprise. She thought she knew Mr. Cameron far better than Florence possibly could, and suspected there was some mistake, yet was uneasy, she scarcely knew why. What was he to her? Why should she care even if he did bestow attention on her friend?

"The idea of my going to the ends of the earth

to teach the heathen," continued Florence, "when I don't profess anything myself! Just as practical as that man is! It proves, Grace, that he is not the man to go. Now I shall pit myself against the American Board. You 'll see who 'll win."

"There may not be any contest," replied Grace cheerily, "for I do not think he has an idea of going himself."

"I am so sure of my address," rejoined Florence, "it will not disappoint me. I know that I am to be a power in society. I have been educated for it. I put it to you, if girls,—petted, spoiled, aristocratic, rich girls,—are not the great attraction of the social circle?"

"It may be true to an extent," replied Grace, "but I suppose far less than formerly, when there were not so many well trained in the schools. How stale and insipid are the common-places, the insincerity and nonsense of society where frivolity reigns!"

"Take care, Grace, or I shall be the hit bird. If I only had beauty sufficient, I really would admire to be a second Madame Recamier. I dearly love to be admired. But how do you propose to help the state of things?"

"It is easy to see how improvements could be made," was the reply. "There should be the right training and education given all the young; they should have a noble purpose in living. The strong should not live to please themselves, but should be

ready to help strengthen the weak. Mothers and daughters should grace society together, refining and helping each other."

"I have no mother," returned Florence, "and I dearly love to have my own way; and this is my programme, since will and money rule the world."

"Florence dear," said Grace tenderly, "do not be too sure of that. I can tell you of something a great deal more worthy of your effort. I have a delightful plan that will give us the happiest kind of employment. It will be making some sad beings happy. My scheme is nearly matured. I have only to get it indorsed by my beloved mother and the ladies associated with her, and it begins its work. Colonel Southbury's niece Ella has the honor of starting me; she was a nun, you know."

"What a funny girl you are! This is your great secret is it? How could that poor depressed thing start you, I do wonder!"

"My sympathy was excited for her, and for those whom she represents," replied Grace.

"She should not get into such a trap," said Florence. "I do not see what I can do to help her. I've no heart for such things, you know. When you need it, I can give some money, if that will help."

"Of course it will," replied Grace, "and it will lead to your getting interested."

"There is one thing more that I long to know," said Florence, "and that is, what you think of the

German Count Stilling. I want to hear the romantic story."

"There's not much to tell. We are good friends," replied Grace, blushing.

It's my opinion that you'll think little of your enterprise, when in company with the count," said Florence with animation. "We girls think he is just wonderful. The very name of a count is so aristocratic. Madame Du Pont knows him as belonging to an old distinguished family. It can not be that you are indifferent to him."

"Oh, no, not indifferent exactly," was the reply, "he is too entertaining and fascinating for that; but he is past his youthful days, and is simply a study to me."

Meanwhile the senator and Hosea Berlin had their conversation, not simply of the horses, but of soul-stirring themes and tragic life-struggles. Although unlike in their station in life, they were two of God's children, whose noble hearts flowed together like drops of water.

Ere nightfall, the eastern city was reached; the proud steeds drew up before the stately mansion of Mrs. Byington, and the lady herself, with her daughter Louise, came out to meet their expected guests, and gave them a most cordial welcome.

As they entered the house, Hosea turned his horses towards Madonna Hall, which was some miles distant,

II.

Behind the Scenes.

TWO middle-aged men met one afternoon in an Eastern city, and cordially greeting each other, repaired to a fashionable hotel for refreshments and confidential converse.

They were old friends, having graduated some twelve years before from a German university. The one with dark brow and enigmatical face was a representative priest of a certain order; the other, talented, learned, courtly, but unprincipled and vacillating, had been professor in a college. Tiring of the confinement, he had travelled awhile, then mingled in politics, came to grief, and at last, on arriving in this country, engaged in a legalized mercantile business, and was reputed to be wealthy.

"Our meeting is a good omen," said Father Buhler, cheerily, as he settled himself in an easy chair, and pointed his companion to another. "Now, please give me further inklings of your affairs and adventures, and if there is occasion, I am at your service."

"Thanks," courteously replied Stilling. "You're the same old friend."

"I should hope so," was the reply; "and as you belong to a lay order, we can be as intimate as formerly."

"Ah, yes, indeed," returned Stilling. "Well, then, you must know that I have lost my wife and one of my children. My wife died in England, where we tarried while on our way here. My youngest child was a victim to scarlet fever, while I was absent in California a month ago. I have still one little girl ten years old, and it is regarding her disposal that I wish your counsel."

"Why not take the oversight of her yourself?" asked Buhler.

"There are reasons why this will never do," replied Stilling. "I have decided to marry. The lady is of the high-caste Leavenworth family, and I doubt if she would incline to choose a widower. I therefore pass myself as unmarried; and what to do with the child is the question. Is n't there an orphan asylum under the care of the church in this vicinity?"

"We have institutions of the kind, maintained partly by state aid, but I believe they are crowded to overflowing. We are, however, building a new foundling asylum, where, as soon as completed, we could give her employment as an attendant or waitress. She could not be more securely hidden if buried. You need then have no more to do with her, leaving the church to adopt her."

"That would accord with my wishes," replied Stilling, "but what can I do with her meanwhile?"

"I wonder that you ask me," returned the other, laughingly. "You, a man of such fertility of resources. Why not place her in a factory until our asylum is ready? To make it safe for your plans, you could pass her in under an assumed name."

"The very thing!" exclaimed Stilling. "It will be a great relief. I confess that I've no real love for her; some ecclesiastic may be her father."

"What is this that you tell me about your marrying again?" asked Buhler, in no way surprised, but ready to change the subject. "Is the lady wealthy?"

Stilling, out of humor, replied,—

"Now, Herr Buhler, I am hungry as a bear, and it is dry talking over one's love affairs when one is famished. Let's be merciful to the inner man, and then we can talk to some purpose."

"You're right, my brother. Press the bell-knob," rejoined the other, composedly.

This done, a choice lunch with wines was ordered, and, as they ate and drank, conversation flowed freely.

"As to the wealth of my lady-love, I am satisfied," remarked Stilling, as he sipped his wine. "I am told that her father pays taxes on a round million, and that indicates a great deal of property."

"You'll be lucky if you get your prize," said Buhler.

“Exactly,” replied Stilling. “She is worth trying for, and I shall not give up for trifles.”

“Are you sure that she fancies you?”

“She does not show that she does,” was the frank reply. “She is coy, and that makes her all the more charming. It may take time, but I am sure of my game in the end. You know me of old.”

“I rather think I do,” was the response, with a smile and an arching of the eyebrows.

“I have power, and know how to use it,” rejoined Stilling. “Miss Grace may keep her distance as much as she will; I know how to bring her to terms by silently working on her mind by my strong will.”

“Yes,” rejoined Buhler, beamingly, over his wine, “you are gifted that way. Now see here, Stilling, put off your love affairs a little, and help get us a few rare birds for the church.”

“What! I gain Miss Grace for the church! No, sir, it’s not to be thought of. I want her and her fortune too much for that.”

“All right,” replied the priest; “but understand me, my brother, the church is rich, the richest corporation on earth, and if you will turn your abilities for a while just on this line, getting rich and attractive girls for our nunneries, you could have a good percentage on the fortunes you were the means of bringing into the church. Come, what do you say? I am one of the Board of Visitors of All Saints’ nunnery,

of the convent of Our Lady of the Scapular, and also of Madonna Hall."

"I will consider the thing," said Stilling, "and confer with you later. But now for my affairs. The Leavenworths must not know that I am a widower, as I told you, and I should prefer that they should not know my business at present. I pass with them as a titled gentleman."

"All right, Stilling; keep dark, and bravely carry your plans through."

"I intend to do so," he replied; "and as the end justifies the means, I shall use any means at hand to secure my prize. The old gentleman, Leavenworth, favors my suit; Miss Grace is amiable and dutiful, and I think is inclined to listen to me to please him. Her mother is conservative and doubtful, regarding me with a critical eye. She is president of a famous society, a perfect lady, whom I greatly admire. I must win her regard."

"That is important," was the reply.

"I pass for a devout Episcopalian," continued Stilling. "If they dreamed that I was not what I seem, my suit would be useless. I could not get my personal influence to bear."

"I see," said Buhler.

"I am connected with one of the largest industries of the country as silent partner," continued Stilling. "It is the California Viticultural Good Samaritan Union, having the manufacture and sale of wines as

their specialty. They wish to promote me to take a more outspoken part, which I cannot do just now, till my matrimonial affairs are settled. I have vastly helped on this great industry by happy suggestions regarding its management. I have shown them how to make the liquor trade as reputable here as in Europe. A feature which I introduced was to set forth the excellencies of California wines for constant table use. I also proposed to employ lady evangelists to go through the land, preaching the glad tidings of our wines. And, at an enthusiastic secret conference from all parts of California last year, it was resolved, because of the impetus I had given the California Viticultural Good Samaritan Union, that I should be called Count Stilling. I demurred, but finally acceded to their wish, and had it engraved on my card, and was thus introduced to the Leavenworths, although they do not dream how I came by the title."

"Count Stilling," returned the other, well pleased, "I predict your success. You are doing a good work for the Church, to get a footing in a Protestant family, and by-and-by I'll help you bring them into the Church."

"There's time enough for that," exclaimed the Count, flushed with wine. I haven't any faith myself, and shall not care to have my family in the Church."

"Ah! Well, you are right in the main, my good

brother," replied the accommodating priest, patting him on the shoulder. "I do not wonder at this lapsing from faith. We men are naturally skeptical, and from seeing the entrails of the system as we do, it makes us doubt every thing, in disgust. I silence myself by asking, 'Where is there anything better?' Now, in France, where our religion flourished so many ages, it is a fact that thirty-nine out of every forty Frenchmen are simply infidels or atheists, and other countries have the same proportion. Is that better than to be Romanists?"

"How is it with the women?" asked Stilling, evading the question. "Have n't they more faith in the Church?"

"Oh, yes; far more!" said Buhler. "If it were not for the women, we could not exist as a church. You see they are either largely illiterate or convent educated. They are less logical than men, more impressible, and more easily managed every way. A woman must have some religion; she needs it as much as the head-gear she wears."

"Yes; and some among you are disposed to take advantage of their weakness."

"I admit it to you," was the answer; "but who has a better right? They need guiding, can be cajoled and flattered; and made to think that, once confirmed, they can have their sins forgiven as often as they confess, and be securely ticketed for heaven."

"You priests manage to keep them in subjection."

"Yes," replied the other, "unless something sets them thinking. And I declare to you, that once start a genuine woman in that line, and she is a very wolf-cat at it; she will give you no peace, and will fret herself to death in her cage."

"I call that sensible grit!" exclaimed Stilling. "I wonder how any woman with half an intellect can endure the abominable questions of the Confessional. I fell out with my wife for believing in the clergy. I shall never marry any but a Protestant, as I do not care to have another meddling in my family affairs. I would disown children that I suspected were not mine."

"What do you mean?" cried Buhler in intense tones, his black eyes flashing.

"I mean no personal offence," more calmly replied Stilling. "You can't help your system. If you grow too pious to ask confessional questions, you'll be reported to the archbishop as heretical in your ways."

"Of course," said Buhler, "the Church is strict there, although we are to use caution, and not offend the refined and cultured."

"That is one reason why I doubt that there is any religion to it," said Stilling strongly; "for we know that the first requisite of religion, if there be such a thing, is purity for women."

"Hush! hush!" said the priest. "If we are too near a thin partition, such opinions will be too widely aired."

Both men looked stealthily around, instinctively drew their chairs nearer together, and talked in lower tones.

"You remember, Herr," said Stilling, "that I, like yourself, had my early training in a church school, under nuns and Jesuits. Then I studied for the priesthood in good faith. I got as far as Peter Den's 'Moral Theology,' and could go no farther. If that is religion, the less you have of it the better. As sure as you're alive, it will have an overhauling in this country. We may as well open our eyes. It is of the Dark Ages, and must go down. The officers of justice will yet attend to certain details of our system."

"Very likely, if they get the power, which I doubt," replied Buhler in the same low, guarded tones. Then fumbling in his pocket, he took out a newspaper cutting, saying, "See this."

Stilling read,—

"According to Judge Halburton, we are pretty sure of this country; he says all America will be a Catholic country. They gain constantly by emigration; more by natural increase in proportion to their numbers; more by inter-marriages, adoptions, and conversions than Protestants. With their exclusive views of salvation, and peculiar tenets, as soon as they have a majority, this country is a Catholic country, with a Catholic government, with the Catholic religion established by law."

"So may it be," grimly replied Stilling, with a cynical smile. At the same time, he intended to be

on the side of the winning party, little caring which it might be. "I have never abrogated my vows. And you?"

"I am to be counted on as true blue," merrily said the priest. "I was a Jesuit to begin with, and my adherence holds out as the years go by. I tell you, Stilling, we are living for a purpose. It is no less an enterprise than the subduing of this country to Rome. Let the nations of Europe fight their own battles; we are under marching orders, and have our campaign here. The plan of operations was cut and dried long ago."

"That's well," said Stilling. "What is the first move?"

"Our hidden policy from the first has been to catch the enemy napping," was the reply. "We have an abundance to work with, and long since sent out men, on good salaries, to search the land and buy in desirable growing sections, as our plans embrace the whole country. We have every opportunity we could ask in this land, as our religion, although antagonistic to its institutions, is allowed and protected."

"How weak on their part!" sneered Stilling. "The same as invite robbers into the house, and entertain them!"

"It certainly shows a lack of sense," remarked the priest wisely. "It indicates that they are not capable of holding their great country; and we, a foreign power, shall yet take and govern it as we please."

Well, to go on. Our next step is to mass our population in the large cities, so as to control the votes, and keep our people in the Church."

"A good move of strategy!" replied Stilling.

"Yes," said the other; "but the right hand of our strength, as it regards the rising generation, is in the parochial schools. We must have the training of our children and youth, or they will slip from our grasp and become American citizens. The pope, foreseeing this, issued his imperative order that every priest see that the children of his parish are in parochial schools. If he omits to do it, he is to be deposed from his office."

"It is easy to make an order," remarked Stilling, "but difficult in this case to put it in execution. Pat in Ireland has of late years refused to heed the mandates from Rome, when they have a political bearing. The Irish in America, getting every day more enlightened, are quick to take a hint. The Germans are not far behind. They know that it is everywhere proclaimed that the common schools are the police force of the nation, by which the present form of government is preserved; and as they have prospered under this form, and suffered under the other, they will cling to what represents their interests, rather than try that which they wearied of in the old country and which seeks traitorously to plant a foreign power on this soil."

"I see," sadly replied Buhler; "and I fear that his

Holiness is going too far, not understanding the case."

"McGlynn's movement shows that," said Stilling. "Now he is a born leader, formerly on intimate terms with Henry Ward Beecher. He cannot work in a rut to save his life, and that parochial school business aroused him. His people were aghast, as there were some hundreds of their children in those splendid public schools of New York City; some of them near graduating with honor. If the Pope was obeyed, every one of them must be taken out and put in the nuns' schools, when the nuns, by good rights, ought to go to school to the children."

"Yes, in every thing except religion," replied Buhler. "Let's see, what ground did he take? I only saw a few items in the paper concerning it."

"He took the part of his people," replied Stilling, "and said that he did not see good reason why the Catholic children should be taken out of the palatial school-houses, consigned to the unhealthy basement of churches, and fed on the catechism. That's common sense. Where was he wrong? "

"When we give ourselves to the Church," replied the other, "we are to be like a corpse, and let the pope do our thinking for us, and that is what makes our organization the strongest on earth. We are a unit."

"Not so on the school question," retorted Stilling, who enjoyed the opposite side; "the ex-priest's con-

tempt for the pope is working mischief. You know that he is the most talented of the priesthood in this country, and would have been archbishop, and even cardinal, if he had kept still."

"Will it pay for him to stand out against the holy father? It's pope-politics or nothing with me," said Buhler.

"Of course," was the reply; "but do you not see that Catholics generally will not be afraid of the pope's curse now? They see it is powerless to harm, and will behave accordingly."

"That is most unfortunate for us," mused Buhler; "but still all the papers we can bribe, keep the masses as ignorant as possible."

"Ah!" returned Stilling, "the public know quite enough of that which it were better for our plans that they did not know. Have you read what happened in Chicago recently?"

"No; I read little news," replied Buhler.

"There are in that city and in Cook County seventy-five different secret clubs of Irish Catholics, many smart, rising men among them. Now, see what influence the defection in Ireland and in this country had on them. At their annual meeting, held recently, they voted that meddling with American politics was not within the province of the pope. He was a foreign power, and those who attempted to do his political bidding here were traitors to this country. That was the honest, outspoken opinion of men, who,

seeing that the Italian despot was defunct, as regarded effective cursing, could with safety cease to be machines moved by another, and begin to think and act as loyal citizens."

"Have a care, Count Stilling," cried the priest, "or your eloquence will lead you astray."

"Never fear," was the reply. "I only state things to you, which I should withhold from all others. But don't let us be too sure that we shall get hold of this country just yet. There are too many *ifs* in the way."

"We must remember, however," was the rejoinder, "that we have all the means we want to work with; and money is power. We have a powerful society of Jesuits, trained by all manner of trickery to supersede, who scruple at nothing to carry their point. If we are smart enough to conquer this country, we mean to hold it."

"That is all right of course," was the reply; "but we can profit from experience. Pope Pius IX. planned in the last war a campaign in the United States. He wrote his letter to the confederacy, indorsing the rebellion in 1863. Our order knew his secret despatches. But I entirely lost faith in him when he came out defeated in that General Council that pronounced his infallibility, and he has been the laughing-stock of all Christendom, and Leo has continued to do like foolish things ever since. It was so weak to seek to be called what he plainly was not.

But then he was seventy-eight years old, just as old as Leo XIII. is now. We must make allowance for decrepitude and childishness."

"Your memory is better than mine," said Buhler; "our Church papers were mostly silent about the circumstances of decreeing his infallibility."

"I was there, and know the details," replied Still-
ing.

"It was arranged that the vast concourse of cardinals, archbishops, priests, and people should gather at St. Peter's Cathedral in the morning. The pope in great pomp was to be stationed at the windows looking east, that the sun might shine on his array of jewels, and make him look divine in the eyes of the crowd. He reckoned wrong; instead of sunlight, there was a fearful thunder-storm, as if all the battalions of the skies were protesting against him; and the great conference had to withdraw to safer quarters within the building. But this is not all of the story. It was in July, 1870; and the very next day the Germans so beset Paris, that the pope's body-guard, the French soldiers, were summoned from Italy to help defend the city. As soon as they left Rome, the Italians rose, Garibaldi was on hand, and Victor Emanuel was proclaimed king the next September; and the Infallible was the merest cipher as respects political power, being only a prisoner in the Vatican. His successor, Leo. XIII. is now amenable to the laws of Italy as a private citizen, specially

hated because of the system he advocates, where best known.

“So sad!” cried Buhler. “He is unfortunate, but we are on hand with our plotting to supply his need.”

Stilling laughed derisively as he poured out another glass of wine, saying,—

“His need! If he is indeed infallible, he ought to have some inherent power to help himself withal.”

“Nonsense!” said the other uneasily; “you reason too much.”

But Stilling, waked up to be garrulous by the wine, continued,—

“You and I are not duped by false pretences at least, although, as you say, we may not utter our thoughts at all times. I confess to you that I am more of an infidel than anything else. I've studied this religion; I've sounded it to the bottom; and I tell you, the Roman Church, so far as its officials are concerned, is a sham, a political, money-making institution. Like the liquor industry, it is run for the money it brings in.”

“Be careful what you say,” replied Buhler cautiously. “It is a most powerful organization, and we both like power and position. It is for our interest to go in strong on this line; and as long as we are permitted to maintain our society, and secretly lay plans in this country, which are not allowed in Europe, there is a fair chance for us to overthrow it,

and seize the reins of power." Then looking at his watch, he exclaimed, "It's near car time. Come, Count Stilling, let's be off."

And settling the bill, they hastened for the train.

III.

A. Benevolent Errand.

ON his return to the pastoral charge of St. Gabriel's Church in the city of his residence, Father Buhler resolved to act on the promptings of his benevolent heart. So he sallied out and was soon at the doctor's office.

"Is Dr. Christie in?" asked he of the door-boy who had answered the bell.

"He is. Walk in, sir," and he was ushered into a neat office, and smilingly accosted the bald-headed doctor of forty years.

"I am here, this morning," began the bland priest, "on an errand of good-will and benevolence."

"Glad to see you, sir," said the doctor, thinking his caller was about to settle the long score of attendance on a number of his flock.

"One of my parishioners," said the visitor, "a fair penitent, is sick with consumption, and needs a physician. The young lady is out of money, and my errand is, this fine morning, to ask, as a great favor, your gratuitous attendance."

Dr. Christie was silent from sheer surprise at this cool audacity; and Father Buhler, nothing daunted, went on,—

“You are famed for generous benevolence to the sick, and I trust that I can depend on your kindly services.”

“Certainly,” replied the genial doctor, with a smile that spoke volumes, “so far as the young lady is concerned, I shall charge nothing, since she is without means; but you are aware, sir, that I have a large list of cases of this kind among your parishioners, and as you are on an errand of good-will and benovence this morning, it occurs to me that you will feel called upon to pay something for this party yourself.”

“It would give me great pleasure to do so,” replied the father, “but according to my vows and the church rules I am not permitted to disburse money to the poor for doctors’ fees. Aside from my living and the expenses of the altar, if I receive an overplus, it belongs to the bishop. In this respect my hands are tied. It is quite different with you, my good sir. I trust that you will call on this patient soon, and faithfully attend the case. The address is 64 Maple Street. I wish you a very good morning, doctor.” And the neatly-gloved man of benevolence and apostolic descent left to make parish calls, taking the sick girl Mary in his way.

The young lady, Mary Bryan, had persisted, against much counsel and clerical opposition, in finishing her

course at the High school, and soon after graduating had secured a fine position as a teacher. What she suffered while studying cannot be imagined save by those who have had a similar struggle. She was beset, persecuted, cursed, and excommunicated, but heroically held on her way in the face of every obstacle. The contest, however, added to hard study, impaired her health; and, ere her friends were aware, she was in a decline. She had taught some eighteen months, and, besides paying her expenses and giving freely to her mother, had laid by five hundred dollars. This fact the mother happened to mention to Father Buhler at confessional, and he at once saw fit to change his base of operations regarding the excommunicated young lady.

“Ah! is that so?” exclaimed he. “Well, we must try and save your daughter. She has sinned a mortal sin, but I will come and pray with her once a week, and shrive her soul.”

“God bless you, father!” exclaimed Mrs. Bryan. “That is so kind of you.”

“I’ll make the charge very cheap, almost free gratis, because she is poor,” he added.

“But what’ll I do, wanting a doctor?” asked Mrs. Bryan, chilled that he wanted pay.

“Give yourself no trouble,” replied the man of expedients, “I’ll attend to that. I shall provide a doctor free of charge. The five dollars you pay me for prayers each week will cover his bill. Mary shall

have the best medical attention, and must come back to the fold of the church."

"I'll tell her she's kindly invited, and may all the saints and the holy mother help her to come!" fervently said the mother.

While Mary Bryan was in the public school, she had, unknown to her family, joined a Sunday-school where several of her friends belonged. She searched her Bible, and found that "there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus," and receiving him by faith she was happy in the Lord.

After going to confession, and hearing the priest's decision, her mother began to labor anew with her, but with little encouragement. The darkness of unbelief could not cast even a shadow on the clear light that shone in Mary's soul. Her peace 'was like a river,' while Mrs. Bryan was filled with unrest and distress.

"Mary, you're the darling of my heart, and it's hard to part with you, and have you go to purgatory for leaving the true church."

"Dear mother, do not worry," was the sweet reply. "Just think, Jesus says, 'Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' He is the high and holy One, and has promised to dwell in our hearts by his Spirit, if only we are humble and contrite. If we come to Him by prayer, and truly trust in Him, we may be sure of one thing, He will give us rest and not suffering."

“But, Mary dear, the priest does not say so,” urged Mrs. Bryan.

“We must be sure and do as the Lord bids us, no matter if the priest does oppose,” replied Mary. “There is no other name given under heaven whereby we can be saved but the name of Jesus. And He is so gentle and loving that a little child can come to Him and be received.”

“Well, darling, He does seem to make you happy. I would not mind believing as you do, if I could find rest like you do. But hush! here’s Father Buhler, himself. Don’t oppose him. Let him have his say, that’s a blessed daughter.”

The priest came into the sick-room with imperious air and lordly tread.

“Are you ready to confess, that I may absolve you?” he asked Mary, abruptly.

She shook her head.

The licensed visitor, however, had regard to business, and said, “I will go on with the service then, *volens volens*,” and at once mumbled over the prayers for the sick. And, as the mother accompanied him to the door on his leaving, said,—

“I’ll take the five dollars now, Mrs. Bryan,” so eagerly that it struck a chill to her heart as she handed him the money.

Father Buhler, knowing that Mary was grounded in the Bible, avoided talking with her before her mother; but having an eye single to the money, he

read prayers time after time, till Mary's patience was exhausted. She plead with her mother to stop his coming, to no purpose, and finally herself forbade his setting foot in the house.

"These prayers, sir," said she, "are not like those I find in the Word of God. They are idolatrous, and I will not hear another one."

"I forbid you the sacraments of the Church and Christian burial. You'll go to torment and stay there. All the masses in the Commonwealth cannot buy you out," sternly said he in great wrath.

"I have no fear, for my trust is in the Infinite Redeemer, who will keep me safely, whether I live or die," was her firm and calm reply.

"Most impious, so to disregard the Church!" cried he, livid with rage. "I shall continue to have prayers with you as long as you live. You can not hinder me, you most cursed of heretics!"

Then taking the mother aside as he passed out, he said,—

"This comes of Protestant influence. If you had kept your child from the godless public school, as I charged you, she would have been drilled into the ways of the church, and we could hold her. A curse everywhere follows the public schools. They are death to our success; and, instead of putting them down, you help them on. Now you see your child is a heretic, and doomed to perdition."

"I cannot think so; dear Mary is so happy in her

belief. She is full of joy, like an angel, and cannot help singing praises to God."

"Do n't you dare mention it!" was the savage reply. "She's an apostate of the blackest dye. Once, when the church had political power, she would have been put in the Inquisition to be tortured into submission."

"Dreadful, dreadful! You don't believe in that, do you, Father Buhler?" asked the mother, amazed and distressed.

"I do," he cried. "We ought to have it here to-day. It's the only way our church will ever prevail over the gates of hell. It is a great loss to the cause that we have n't it in full-blast operation here and now. That's why these young folks dare leave the fold. There is too much liberty. I've a good mind to put the thumb-screws on your daughter this moment!"

He little knew the spirit of the mother. He had stirred up a very lioness, and with flashing eyes she cried, —

"Father Buhler, get out of my house, and don't you ever dare to darken my doors again! If I would allow it, understand me, the laws of my country would not. We even have a society for the prevention of cruelty to animals. Much more shall our helpless sick ones be cared for."

"Hush, hush; be silent," said the priest.

But she continued, —

“Since you, a minister of religion, show a desire to torment my daughter, you are plainly not of God. My daughter’s religion is a thousand times better than yours. Take this five dollars and begone!”

Her flashing eyes, heightened color and stinging words so wrought upon the false priest that he made haste to depart.

The door being open into Mary’s room, she heard the altercation, and for the first time found that the ecclesiastic had charged five dollars each for his unwelcome visits.

“Mother dear,” said she, “I see that you have given money for that which is far worse than useless, and we have not paid Dr. Christie, who is a skilful physician and a benefactor to the poor. This is very wrong. He has helped me, and I am under great obligations to him, and we must do justly.”

“You are right, darling, and we will pay him every cent we owe him.”

“I’ve heard him say that he never takes a case but he prays over it,” said Mary. “And I believe his prayers, with his remedies, have been a blessing to me, and I am getting better.”

“Do you think so, my darling? He is a kind man, a man of God. A cruel man is not of God. I’ve done with Father Buhler. It’s a pretence of religion that has the heart to torment anybody. Thumb-screws! Ah, he let out his secret. Now I believe that nuns in the convents are sometimes

cruelly punished, and there is no one to help them. What a shame it is that in this free country such things can be done, and be covered up from sight ! If you had been a nun, Mary, and had displeased Father Buhler, he would have dealt hardly with you ; I can see that."

"Yes, mother dear ; and I cannot be too thankful that I am not in such a case. I've prayed over my troubles, and the Lord has heard me. It was dreadful for me to hear those senseless, heathenish prayers, and I told Him all about it, and now I praise Him that I shall hear them no more. Hereafter, when I pray, I mean to remember the poor oppressed nuns, as if bound with them."

IV.

The End Justifies the Means.

MRS. BYINGTON, Grace Leavenworth's aunt, owned a large estate left her by her husband, and lived in a fine mansion.

Her only child, Louise, was romantic and easily influenced, and became fascinated with ritual observances while with Florence Fairfax, at Madame Du Pont's seminary. Florence had small trace of sham devotion in her nature, and always laughed whenever she saw foolish ceremonies or any verging towards idolatry. Louise was shocked at what she called a want of reverence, and said, for her part, she thought that "the Catholic religion was too charming for any thing. I like it," she added, "for it is so easy to get rid of one's sins. One has only to confess them, the priest forgives, and that is the end of them."

"Is it?" asked Florence, for once waked from her usual indifference. "I've heard it said that none can forgive sin but God only."

"Well, that is a mistake," replied Louise, warmly.

“Our rector, Father Van Allstyn, do n’t teach any such hard doctrine. He do n’t believe in a change of heart, either. He says that young people should not think for themselves on religious subjects, but let the church think for them. So you see, if one’s sins are forgiven, and the religious thinking done, it is a velvet way to heaven, and one’s life flows on as smoothly as a song.”

“Well,” exclaimed Florence, arranging her refractory hair, “I don’t mind how much thinking others do for me, provided they don’t make me swallow the sum total of their cogitations, and try to upset my ideas. I must have my own way. I do not choose to be tied down to set rules of a doubtful character, since I live in a free country.”

It was at recess, and the girls had gathered near to hear what Florence had to say. She continued, —

“I could tell you a story of one who was foolish enough to give herself and her property away, because she was easily persuaded; when she got sick of her bargain, and wanted to go back to her own lovely home, you see, girls, she could not. She was a prisoner for life, you see!”

“Oh, was n’t that perfectly awful!” exclaimed one of the girls.

“Now, Florence, who was it?” asked another. “What was her name?”

But Madame Du Pont swept into the room without

warning, and dispersed them to their studies and classes.

Louise, however, steadfastly held to her idea of confessing as soon as she had the opportunity. It was sufficient, in her view, that Rector Van Allstyn, her father's cousin, advised it as a great safeguard for young persons. This was a little before the close of school; and consequently, on her return home, he found her in a promising state of mind for his plans.

We now turn aside a moment to glance at one who kept close watch of the Byingtons and their friends. Mrs. Byington's housekeeper, Bridget, had been with her for many years. She was thirty-five, strong, energetic, hard-featured and ungainly, but, as a rule, considered trustworthy, and, feeling that she was part and parcel of the household, prided herself on knowing all that transpired in it. Being very religious in her own estimation, she went often to mass, and was punctual at the confessional.

One summer afternoon she entered the church, flushed and heated with her walk, and commenced fanning herself as she was seated by the confessional box. The priest was one side of the thin partition, and she the other; between them was the open window, where a blind revealed her face to him, he looking down upon her, while his was hidden from her. She was so near that he could hear every word, even if she spoke in a low voice, which was not her custom, unless especially guarded.

Bridget was voluble, chatty, and loved to gossip, and Father Buhler encouraged her to discourse freely on matters that interested her.

After the customary opening questions, he said, —

“Have you other special temptations or sins to confess, Bridget?”

“Not a wan, your riverance, barin’ it ’s the family concerns. What’s a lone body loike meself to do with me temptations? I bez that swallered up with warrk, arly and late, that I has no time to waste on meself. I drops to slape, throwin’ meself on me bed without undressing, for I has to be up in the mornin’ the first in the house, to git breakfast, and I goes to warrk mumblin’ me prayers to the howly Virgin on the stairs, an’ as I rakes out the stove, an’ makes the fire.”

“All right,” said the priest, “what have you to confess about the family?”

“They have got lots of company, now. They always has in summer-time. There ’s the mistress, Miss Louise, Miss Leavenworth, Miss Fairfax, an’ Miss Southbury. Then Count Stilling is coming, Minister Cameron, an’ Colonel Southbury, an’ goodness knows who next; for everybody an’ their cousins come to our house, an’ it ’s meself is expected to do the cookin’ for them all, batin’ the girls that help me.”

“Do you want to leave?”

“Howly mother, no!” cried Bridget. “I could not find another place where they’d trate me so well.”

“You 've a good mistress, then?”

“Pretty good, considerin'. There's no end to her money; but she's a bit close with it, barin' when she takes a notion to loosen her purse-strings, and then she gives a wonderful deal. Now, to me, your riverence, she's as close as a Jew; an' she requires me to see that not a thing is missing from her room, or the young ladies,' either. If anything is missin', the price of it cooms out of me wages.”

“Indeed, how did that come to pass? Did you ever help yourself to anything that did not belong to you? Remember, now, I can look right into your soul, and you must tell me true.”

“Well, well!” exclaimed Bridget, “your riverence is very knowledgeable, to be sure. What's the use of confessing, when your honor can look into me moind like? If you are lookin' into my soul, you see hidden away one thing I disremembered to confess. I did take some of mistress's things, and some of Miss Louise's a long time ago. They was what they did n't want, an' what would be useful to me.”

“Ah, I see! Go on,” said Father Buhler, in no way surprised.

“It was n't stalin' at all,” continued Bridget, “for my twin brother, Ralph Murray, he's a great scholar entirely, — when he was studyin' to be a priest, he used to read some of the doctrines to me; an' in one place it says, ‘If your employer does not pay you what you ought to have, you may help yourself to enough to

make the wages right, if you can do it and not be found out."

"Yes, yes, I see," said he, busily thrusting his fingers through his hair.

"I wanted to make my pay square like, out of mistress's an' Miss Louise's wardrobe, an' sure I was blest in doin' of that same, for I prayed about it to the blessed Virgin to favor me in it. An' sure the blessed mother did."

"You did well to pray, Bridget," said Buhler, kindly. "What did you take?"

"It was n't a sin, father," she argued, "and why should I confess?" Then more pleadingly, "Sure, it 's no consequence to your riverence to know all the private affairs of a poor body loike meself."

"Bridget, hear me,!" said the priest earnestly. 'You must keep nothing from me. Your mind must be laid open to me like a book. I take the place of God to you, and nothing must be hidden from me. What did you take, and what did you do with Mrs. Byington's things?"

"I never see the beat of it, your riverence, you're that knowledgeable! Well, if I must, I must; but it is not a sin; my brother, Ralph Murray, and the church-book says so."

"Very well; go on," he said, encouragingly.

The Jesuit always takes the part of the sinner, allows theft and other crimes, if hidden.

"You see they was all off on an excursion to the

beach, and left me to put the house to rights. I got through with my warrk, tidied up the rooms, and then the time hung heavy. I could n't go away, for mistress said I must stay and watch the house, as the rest of the servants were off, an' tramps might break in; an' if they did, I was to ring the big bell an' rouse our neighbors and the police."

"Yes; go on," said Father Buhler.

"I went to the mistress's long wardrobe, where her best things was kept, and took down her dresses and laid them on the bed, to look them over. There was ever so many, about twenty. There was six silk, two black ones stiff enough to stand alone, one slate, one green, and two brown. Oh, didn't my mouth water for that lovely green one. Here was jist the chance for me to fit me out to be a lady, for onst. Then there was eight soft woolen dresses. I concluded as me pay was only half what it should be, that I would as the church rules say, make up the difference, and take six dresses. I put three silk and three woolen dresses into a large sack, and took them to the pawnshop round the corner. It was kept by an old Jew, and I took out one at a time, and asked twenty dollars a piece for them, but the greedy thing only gave me fifty dollars for the lot. But that was better than nothing, and a good morning's warrk; I did n't complain, but hurried to the Five-cent Savings Bank, and put it by safe and sound. Your riverence will not blame me, for it was fifty dollars taken from Pro-

testant hands and put into safe Catholic care; and as a thank-offering I gave ten dollars of that same into the church collection."

"Go on," said he, in a pleased way. "There's more to tell. Did Mrs. Byington find out her loss?"

"Whurra, what would I do, desavin' your riverence? The mistress didn't find out her loss for a long time; and when she questioned me, I didn't know any more about it than the dead at first, then I said I seed a woman and a man hanging round the house, an' they must have got in and stole the things, while I was tidying the parlor. I had put the rest of the dresses back, barin' a black cashmere, which I took to my dressmaker and had it fitted over. My clothes needed recruiting, and there was Miss Louise flush with trunks and bureaus full. I found the keys convanient, she'd forgot them in her hurry, and I went through her things, for I'd been paid only six dollars a week, and I valued my sarvices at twelve dollars, seeing they was able to pay. I took two sets of underclothes; an' if I was a-goin' to git married, I don't know of a better place to git an outfit, if I had as good a chance."

"But these clothes, were n't they too fine for your use?"

"Yes, your riverence, and too small; but I had me wits left, and I went to me cousin who had helped herself to some of her mistress's clothes, very providential that day, when all the rich folks was off to

picnic. Her mistress was my size, and we exchanged, and neither mistress suspected what we had done. Father Buhler," added Bridget, "I bees a very busy woman, and has great care of me warrk; I gave you ten dollars extra to cover sins I might forget to mention."

"Yes, Bridget, I remember; that account is all correct. Did Miss Louise find you out?"

"Never a bit did she suspect me, although I heard her say to her mother, 'Something is wrong in my bureau.' I had taken her gold bracelets, and pawned them for ten dollars; but one of her lovely breastpins I did so want to wear, and I put it with my things in my drawer, and when I was off at mass they found it. It was worth a great deal, and Miss Louise and her mother was towerin' angry, and came near putting me in jail. I told them I found it when I was sweeping, and was n't to blame for its bein' so valuable; that I'd no idea it was anything but washed brass. They cooled down then, and as I was the best help they ever had, and they couldn't run the house without me, they made up, and trusted me as much as ever. I had, counting the fifty and the ten, and the dress being made over for me, upwards of a hundred dollars as my day's work of rummaging. I was patient, and did not complain, and said prayers two mortal hours on my knees to all the saints and to the howly Virgin."

"But why did n't you confess all this before, Bridget?"

“It’s out of regard to your riverence,” smilingly replied she. “I did n’t want to trouble you with things of no account. As long as it was according to rules and the regulation of the church, as my brother explained it to me, it was not a sin to be confessed. It is my sins you told me I was to confess; and for a Catholic to take from a Protestant to make up wages unjustly kept back, is just and right, and not necessary to be confessed.”

“It is certainly allowable at times,” sagely observed Herr Buhler. “But be very careful; do not venture to take anything more for two months, without my consent. You may as well wait longer.”

Then aside to himself, “It is a fact that every thing in this country is, so to speak, the property of his holiness, the pope, and his faithful children ought not to be kept out of the use of it. But we must be cautious. It is not safe yet to spoil the Egyptians. We must bide our time in patience.”

“I’ll observe your counsel, Father Buhler.”

“How does Miss Louise stand toward the church?” asked he.

“She’s the best one of them all; not a bit of a heretic,” replied this eavesdropper and spy. “The windows of my room opens right above the side window of Mrs. Byington’s room; and when I leans out to take the air like, and she an’ Miss Louise happen to be sittin’ there with their embroidery, I can hear every word, for they both speak plain. Mrs. Bying

ton is High Church, and so is Miss Louise, and she is embroidering a pair of slippers for the new rector Father Van Allstyn, and he's a hearty Jesuit; a great secret, but I've found it out, and they both are just bewitched to embroider an altar-cloth."

"Indeed," said the priest.

"Yes, your riverence, and I heard Miss Louise say that if she outlived her mother, she should give her fortune to the convent, and take the veil."

"Well, now, that is good news," said the eager son of the church, half-talking to himself. "She is educated, fair and rich, a most fitting offering. Be good and faithful and win her all you can. And the Blessed Virgin will see to the mother."

"Oh, your riverence, I'll do all I can," was Bridget's reply.

"What more, Bridget? Who else did you say was a the house?"

"Whurra, your riverence, you're a master man for explorin' of the families. It's Miss Louise's schoolmate and cousin and Colonel Southbury,—and that reminds me that I must be hurryin', and get my kettle on for tay."

"I know about the Colonel and his record, but are the rest Protestants? And what may be their names?"

"They is Protestants, dyed in the wool," replied Bridget. "Miss Grace Levenworth is Miss Louise's cousin, and Miss Florence Fairfax is her schoolmate."

“What more do you know about them?”

“I know they don’t jist agree with Miss Louise. She’s more for the pope’s religion than they be. She believes in private schools, and they believe in public schools.”

“What more?”

“Miss Louise says she thinks the confessional may be a good thing for some people; and the other young ladies, they say it is a sin and a shame, and ought to be put down by law.”

“You heard them say so?” asked he, in a grave displeased way.

“I did, your honor. I had to pick currants back of the arbor and garden, and I heard them say so.”

“What else?” asked he in the same tones.

“Miss Louise thinks purgatory must be a very good thing to burn up people’s sins, and make them clean; and her friends pooh-pooh and laugh, and say there’s no such place at all. And when I was doin’ of the chamber work, I see them get their Bibles and turn to vurses to prove what they said.”

“You did? That comes of the cursed public schools and Sabbath-schools.”

“Miss Grace said,” continued Bridget, — “and oh, she is jist as pretty as a lily, with pink cheeks, the most beautiful of them all. I never seen sich a beauty. I’m jist ravin’ about her, and she is sich a foine lady, always doing me some kind turn.”

“What did she say?” asked the priest, eagerly.

“Miss Grace said that the Roman church was plainly a money-making concern, and there would be no such thing as masses, the confessional and purgatory, if it was n’t for the money they bring,” replied Bridget.

“Poor thing?” calmly replied the priest, although he was sorely vexed. “That shows how ignorant she is of our holy religion. She needs some one to teach her our catechism, poor thing!”

“I crossed meself, and said me prayers to the Virgin,” said Bridget, “and was so agitated that I spilled me currants.”

“No wonder. And what did Miss Louise say to such talk?”

“She said that she had very dear friends in that church, and she believed that it was as good as any other, and she was going to stand up for it.”

“Bridget, you bring me good news. The blessing of the Virgin be upon you. Keep close watch and come again and tell me how the battle goes.”

Bridget then departed to get “tay,” and be faithful to the charge given her.

Buhler shut the confessional box, and went to walk just before supper, so busy with his thoughts that he scarcely noticed where he went. After the evening meal, which he dispatched in a very business-like way, oblivious of what he ate, he went to his study and wrote a letter with marked care. As he read it over, there was the peculiar, characteristic smile,

which, on rare occasions, lit up his inscrutable face. "I'll teach that clique a thing or two, and it would n't be strange if I hoodwinked the Colonel, and got a familiar footing there."

When the servant at Byington mansion brought in the evening mail on a silver salver, Mrs. Byington, Louise, Florence and Grace, with Count Stilling, Colonel Southbury, Ella Southbury, the escaped nun, and Rev. Augustus Cameron were sitting on the veranda, enjoying the cool breeze which was fragrant with honeysuckle and other flowering plants.

The company continued chatting pleasantly as Mrs. Byington perused her letter, when she exclaimed,—

"Well, of all things, this is a wonder !"

"Oh, what can it be ?" cried Louise, sinking down on a hassock at her mother's feet. "If it is n't a secret, do tell what the wonder is."

"Secret ?" she replied. "No, indeed ; it should be published from one end of the land to the other. Colonel Southbury, I elect you secretary *pro tem*, that you may read this to us, after which I shall take it very kindly if you will all freely express your opinion regarding it."

The senator in his courtly way received the letter, and before the reading, Mrs. Byington said,—

"Mr. Cameron and Count Stilling, I wish especially your judgment upon this letter."

She said this with a gracious, complimentary air, designed to show that she fully appreciated them.

All were waiting in pleased expectancy, when Colonel Southbury read in deep, musical voice as follows,—

ST GABRIEL'S PARSONAGE, June 23, 18—
MRS. ARTHUR BYINGTON :

Dear Madam, — Pardon the liberty I take in addressing you. A sense of justice to yourself impels me to this course. Briefly, the circumstances are these: a young man whom my holy oath of office forbids me to reveal, has confessed to me that he dishonestly obtained one hundred dollars from you in some way, and at a certain time, which I may not mention.

He is poor, and has no means to repay you, as I advised, and as he wishes; but I am happy to send it to you out of my limited stipend, unwilling that one of my flock should be under obligations which I can discharge.

Enclosed please find check for one hundred dollars.

Trusting that no one will ever again wrong one so good and noble as yourself, and wishing you prosperity and peace. Very truly your friend,

HERR BUHLER,

Pastor of St. Gabriel's Church.

"Well, now, Count Stilling, is n't this magnanimous?" said Mrs. Byington. "Yet I have n't the slightest memory of losing one hundred dollars."

"It is very noble," replied he.

"Oh, yes," cried Louise, clapping her hands. "Father Buhler is a jewel to do that. Don't you think so, Colonel Southbury?"

“I would prefer not to pass judgment, until I can study the man, and have a glance at his motives,” said the gentleman, critically. “It is well known that he puts his sick poor in the hands of a Protestant physician, whom he never pays.”

“Ah, you hard-judging men!” whispered Louise to the Colonel.

“Mr. Cameron, we await your opinion,” said Mrs. Byington.

“It seems that we have the priest before us,” was Mr. Cameron’s reply,” and are passing judgment upon this act of his. He is for the time being a prisoner at the bar of our opinion. In his missive he gives an excuse for writing. The lawyers are accustomed to say that when people are engaged in making excuses they falsify; hence, the reason he gives for sending this letter amounts to nothing, in a legal view. The young man of whom he speaks is a myth, and his letter a fraud.”

Florence was greatly taken with the young clergyman’s argument, and turned to give him an approving smile, when she discovered that he was talking in a low voice with Grace.

“Yes, Gracie, let’s know what you think?” said Mrs. Byington.

“Well, aunt,” was the reply, in her cautious way, “the letter appears to be sincere, and the writer modestly expresses himself.”

Count Stilling, sitting on the other side of Grace,

bowed assent, and attempted to press her hand, which she quickly withdrew.

"What do you think, Florence dear?" asked Mrs. Byington.

"I am puzzled; but suppose Mr. Cameron and Grace must be right," replied Florence confused and not knowing what else to say.

"Yes," said Stilling with a candid air, "we Protestants should be just, and acknowledge a noble act when we see it. We are inclined sometimes to be uncharitable because of our prejudices."

"Colonel Southbury we await your views," said Mrs. Byington, gracefully inclining her head to that gentleman.

"Do you suppose, my dear madam," said the senator, a smile of sarcasm lighting his fine face, "if you had been poor and dependant, that this money would have been sent you? The satellites of Rome do not, as a rule, part with money unless something is to be gained by it. If you were needy and without influence, do not think he would be as generous?"

"Why, I think he would," replied Mrs. Byington. "What possible object could he have in sending me the one hundred dollars, if, as you say, the clergy are so loath to part with their money?"

"Madam," returned the Colonel, "this is an old trick of wily ecclesiastics, to send large sums on false pretenses to wealthy people, generally those having political influence, and thus get introduced to Prot-

estant homes and influential circles, into which they could otherwise never gain access."

"Can that be possible?" asked Stilling incredulously.

"It is even so," replied Colonel Southbury with dignity. "I have lived in England, Canada and in Washington, and know that it is done; and from time to time worldly, unsuspecting, rich families are swept into Rome by that device."

"I do not want to think meanly of so good a man," said Louise with a frown.

"Well, Miss Louise," he answered, "you must remember that if a Jesuit is faithful to his vows, he is a very cat in duplicity. It is a crime for him to be found asleep when there is any cream to be stolen."

"What an idea!" exclaimed Mrs. Byington, laughing as well as the rest. "I hope Father Buhler is not of that order."

"It is his boast that he is," replied the Colonel, gravely, a piece of information that Mrs. Byington did not wish to believe; and she turned to Miss Southbury, "What do you think, Cousin Ella?"

"Do not ask me, aunt," was the low-voiced reply. "I have no faith in the clergy, whatever their pretensions."

"I am afraid that you are too critical," rejoined the hostess, "but I am reminded, Colonel Southbury, that I interrupted you; please go on."

"Thanks," replied he with a grateful bow; "I was

about to ask if we cannot read the Jesuits' oath, but will content myself with an illustration of what he does."

"That will do just as well for this evening, I think," said Mrs. Byington. "Another time we will give it a hearing."

"Well," continued the Colonel, "I never watch the actions of the Jesuits,—and I have long known them,—without thinking how catlike they are. Did you ever see puss station herself where she could watch the pantry-door, and piously wink, opening and closing her eyes in perfect innocence, and pretend that she is asleep, until you think she is too blameless to do harm? You venture to leave the door open, turn your back one instant, and she is at once wide awake, and slips into the pantry, and does the mischief that she has been planning all along, and which, if you had had your wits about you, you would have prevented."

"Seems to me that the senator is rather long-winded," whispered Count Stilling to Grace.

"Go on, Colonel," said Mr. Cameron, who heard the whisper, "I am with you in that view."

"Oh, it is all in a nut-shell," continued the colonel. "England has forgotten to shut her pantry-door, and so has our country; the cat-like Jesuit has slid in, is at the cream, and, what makes the case worse, the cat has the strength of a wild animal, and must be dislodged by strategy or force. Perhaps, however, a vigilant watching will discourage the mischief."

“Well,” said Mrs. Byington, “I prefer to think that the clergyman meant well.”

“We all seem to enjoy our own opinion,” pleasantly rejoined the Colonel, as the young people started out for a walk.

The silent, quondam nun, although invited to go with them, remained behind with Mrs. Byington, who was in a perplexed state of mind. Should she politely reply to the note, or ignore it? As Ella Southbury could not sympathize with her, she soon repaired to her easy-chair in the adjacent parlor.

V.

Doomed.

REV. MR. VAN ALLSTYN, Mrs. Byington's rector and relative, roomed in her house, taking his meals at the adjoining hotel. A Jesuit in disguise, he worked craftily for the papacy. He was well posted as to the state of affairs in Byington mansion, and it was his influence that made Mrs. Byington and daughter lean towards Rome.

While the discussion was going on regarding the letter, he was ensconced in his favorite arm-chair in the corner of the parlor, near one of the windows opening on the veranda, and closely gave ear to what was said by each one of the party.

After the young people went to walk, Mrs. Byington returned the parlor. In the dim light she did not at first observe him, but at length seeing his chair filled, said, —

“Are you here, cousin Van Allstyn?”

“I am here, Miriam. It is the coolest place I find,” was his pleasant reply.”

“I am glad that you are comfortable,” she rejoined cordially, as she rolled an ottoman near, and sat down beside him. “You must have heard the letter, and the comments, as well.”

“I did so, cousin Miriam,” replied he in winning tone.

“And what is your opinion?” asked she.

“I am utterly surprised, cousin Miriam. Only Count Stilling, Miss Louise and yourself had the least appreciation of the noble purpose that led to the sending of that letter. The least you can do is to gratefully acknowledge it, and invite him to call. I want him to meet Colonel Southbury; they ought to be on intimate terms. When such a holy man of God as Father Buhler is, does a deed of Christian charity, why not give him his due? What a heathenish set heretics are! Drowning in the depths of the sea is too good for them.”

“Please, cousin John, do not class me in your list of criminals,” laughed Mrs. Byington in a frightened way.

“Oh, no, cousin; you are all right, unless you draw back unto perdition. I wish you to walk right along, with your eye on Rome. That is the true Church, and all the mushroom sects that condemn it do not know what they are talking about.”

“Surely you do not include the Episcopal church, the altar where you minister?”

“Oh, no, Miriam,” he replied. “And yet she is,

in the nature of the case, very far below the high ideal of the holy mother Church; you must allow that."

"Do not hurry my tottering steps too fast, cousin John," replied Mrs. Byington; "please remember that one must creep before one can walk."

"Of course, that is reasonable, Miriam," he replied; "but on one thing I must insist, and that is, that you do not hinder Miss Louise's progress. She is younger than you, and can more easily get initiated; besides, her training at Madame Du Pont's school has given her a good start."

"Hinder Louise!" exclaimed Mrs. Byington in a tried tone, "more likely that she will hinder me."

"I think not," replied the rector knowingly. "She confesses to me; it is allowable and optional, you know. Although we do not compel, we strongly recommend it. She confesses, and I find that she has quite an idea of joining a convent."

"Joining a convent! How dared you suggest such a thing before coming to me? My only one, too!" and Mrs. Byington burst into tears.

"Well, as to that," he coolly replied, "you could yourself join, put your property in, and you would be honored as a lady of high degree, if you choose."

"I doubt it!" she exclaimed.

"Why not? Many are doing so," he said. "Many rich Protestants are attracted by the glitter and renown of Rome to take this step. It gives one such

a prestige; one rules there unquestioned, you know."

"But all cannot reign; and there are such fearful stories in circulation about the sins of the clergy, and the treatment of the nuns," she said.

"Oh, that 's nothing! The great antiquity of the church proves that it is pure, and the only true church.

"I suppose so," she replied; "that is, I cannot prove it is not. I like your preaching, cousin John, and the little circumstantials you have introduced, —the altar boys, the choir boys, the candles, the stained glass of the windows, and the dim, religious light."

"I seem to get on slowly, however, compared with my eager wishes," was the answer. "But Rome was not built in a day, neither will it do to change over a wandering church too suddenly to the old standard. We must watch the prejudices of the people, and not overturn too fast."

"I suppose so. But to return to Louise, I do not want her to spoil her prospects for an eligible match by any talk of a possible going to a convent," plead the mother.

"Nonsense," was the reply. "What chance has she for such a match?"

"Chance enough, as I well know," replied Mrs. Byington, bridling with spirit. "My Louise is very much sought after by gentlemen wishing to marry."

“Miriam,” he said, “do not get deceived in that direction. Men, as a rule, do not marry now-a-days. They have their club houses and live celibate lives. What do mothers in England say? Mrs. Lucas, sister of John Bright, makes the statement that ‘English mothers no longer look upon marriage as a probable destiny for their daughters.’ Girls are not educated to make comfortable homes, and the race of men are so selfish that they do not care to support an idle doll, or take home a useless piece of furniture.”

“I am still sure that a good young lady with money, in this country, stands a fair chance for marriage,” said Mrs. Byington.

“Yes, if she is willing to be married for her money, and is not too particular. There are adventurers who are ready to take charge of their funds, I suppose.”

Ella Southbury, who overheard this conversation from her seat on the veranda, thought that the convent claims for rich girls and their money came under this head. She had barely escaped being held, money and all, for life.

“You’ll find, Miriam, that there is not the shadow of a chance that Louise can marry to her mind,” pursued Mr. Van Allstyn.

“I have never looked at it in that light,” rejoined Mrs. Byington. “You see I am quite sure she could wed Senator Southbury if she wished.”

“Could she?” thought Ella Southbury. “I doubt

it." She felt almost guilty for being where she could hear what was not intended for her ears, but could not move without attracting attention, and a sense of diffidence kept her still.

"Senator Southbury?" echoed the rector. He would be of more suitable age for you. But he is what they call a reformed Catholic, which in my view is a renegade not worthy of notice. When the church gets the helm, he will have to answer for his heresy. He'll find that it does not pay."

"He thinks that he had good reasons for leaving," said Mrs. Byington.

"Of course he had not," replied the rector, in anger. "And, Miriam, there's another thing that needs adjusting. You are pursuing a course in regard to a certain person that will bring down upon you the wrath of the church as soon as she has the power."

"Why, what can you mean?" asked she, in alarm.

"Can you not guess?" replied he, sternly.

"I have not the faintest idea," was the reply.

"And yet you harbor, aid and abet a fugitive from a convent, in the person of Ella Southbury! Hear what the church says about this sin and its penalty."

The rector reads from his note-book,—

"We decree, further, that all who may have dealings with heretics, and especially such as receive,

defend or encourage them, shall be excommunicated ; shall not be eligible to any public office ; shall not be admitted as a witness ; shall neither have power to bequeath his property by will, nor to succeed to any inheritance.

“ Boycotted at every turn, you perceive.”

“ Well, I am glad that I am not a member of that church,” said Mrs. Byington, in some fear of what her rector read. “ Ella was brought up with Louise, and is one of the family. It is a poor story if we can not befriend her when in trouble.”

“ If you were her true friend, you would send her back where she belongs. If you do not, remember that your property will be confiscated by-and-by.”

“ I must say,” replied Mrs. Byington, “ that if the Catholic Church did such a thing as confiscate my property for my doing as I am doing by Ella, I have little faith in it.”

“ The truth is,” the rector went on, without heeding this remark, “ young people need to have their course marked out, and to be told what to do. And what agent on earth can do this equal to God’s appointed means, the church ? ”

“ That may be,” replied Mrs. Byington, “ but it is not for me to turn traitor to her, and send her back to Madonna Hall. It is enough for me that she saw fit to leave. But she is perfectly silent as to the reason of her leaving. They would not let the senator take her away until they extracted a promise from

her that she would never divulge a word of the secret workings of that institution."

"I faithfully warn you, Miriam," rejoined the rector, "she is liable to be seized and taken back, possibly not to that convent, but to some neighboring one. She gave herself to the church, in the most solemn covenant, and always will belong there, say what she will; and unless you are faithful to her, and show her her duty, you will be interdicted for holding papal property. If the convent officials come for her, I pray you, do not interfere to hinder them in their duty. I have put them on her track."

Ella had heard enough, there was then no safety in her friend's house. Where could she find rest for the sole of her foot?

She watched for the company when they came back; and, after Count Stilling and Mr. Cameron took leave, asked Senator Southbury and Grace to walk with her, which they were glad to do.

She had her hat and wrap, and as they passed down the street, in a few words she told them her danger; and, thanks to Grace and her mother's foresight, there was a refuge for her, in that provided for young ladies needing a place of safety, in the Aid Society's rooms.

"Oh, Ella," exclaimed Grace. "I wanted to talk about my enterprise with you to-night. We are in want of a secretary, and you will be just the one; if you will accept the post, I will be greatly relieved."

"I will gladly accept," replied Ella, "if I am qualified."

"You will be, fully, as soon as you are introduced to the details," was the reply. "Come with us; it is only a little way, and you may as well be settled to-night. No one will think of looking there for you."

Ella tripped along joyously at thought of getting information and succor all in the same evening.

The senator was a man of few words, but his expressive "Yes, yes," seconding whatever the young ladies said, was very helpful. It is so nice to have a strong masculine arm to lean upon when in trouble, and Ella knew that he would stand by her even unto death.

After a walk of half a mile, they reached the lofty mansion, a wing of which was appropriated to the Aid Society; and Grace, having a key, ushered in the Southburys, and introduced Ella to the matron as her assistant and secretary, and showed her to a lovely room, a little retired from a front view, where she could have her piano and books, when not in the office.

"Oh, Miss Leavenworth!" she cried, as the Colonel and that young lady rose to leave, "I am so relieved and happy. I begin to feel that I can still be of some use in the world. And Uncle Robert," she said, turning to him. "I shall want to see you as often as you want to come."

He replied that that would be very often, and the two took leave, committing her to God, and thankful that such a covert was at hand for her in time of need.

Fathers Krafts and Pecci, being stirred up by rector Van Allstyn, called early the next day to get the wanderer back, but Mrs. Byington, having sent to her room, simply reported that she was not in; and they left, saying that they would call again.

The next day Mrs. Leavenworth met Grace at the Aid rooms of the Young Women's Christian Association, and most cordially welcomed Ella to her new situation. She was made to feel at home some months ago, and business was arranged for her, greatly to her delight.

As Grace and Ella were looking over letters, making notes of and replying to them, Colonel Southbury called and was soon engaged in earnest conversation with Mrs. Leavenworth.

"I cannot sufficiently thank you, madam, for the 'Treatise on Prophecy' you sent me," said the senator.

"I am pleased that you like it," was the reply. "I sent a copy of the same work to several friends as a Christmas token."

"I am glad you did," rejoined the senator. "It was the most valuable gift that I ever received. I there learned what the papacy is, as described by the Word of God. It was that which removed the

shackles and set me free. It gave me what I lacked, deep, heart-felt reverence for 'all Scripture.' Rome, in some cases, allows her dupes to have Bibles, that she may deceive Protestants by a show of having them, but the less her people read the Bible, the better Romanists they are. I wonder that I could so long remain at ease, and neglect to search the Word of God. I am engaged in sending prophetic works to thoughtful Romanists, with a few words of my experience and counsel. I believe they can be reached more readily by calling attention to the foretelling and fulfilling parts of God's Word than any other, as is the case with infidels. Show them what God foretold by his prophets, and how it came to pass in every minute particular, hundreds and thousands of years after, and there is given them faith in the Bible, that all the powers of evil cannot disturb. I am only a beginner in these things myself, having so recently emerged from the power of darkness, and have many questions to ask. You have the advantage of me, in having studied them for years."

"Yes," replied the lady brightly. "And of this one thing I am confident, that prophecy is a light in a dark place, this world, to which we do well to take heed."

"It is passing strange that predictions of the future are so much neglected. How do you account for it?" asked he.

"We have too little persecution, I suppose," replied the lady smilingly. "When things move on

smoothly with the church, most are prone to take their ease, and dream of peace and safety ; but when affliction comes, as was the case with the martyrs, there is at once a genuine desire to look into God's mirror of the future. But whoever abides in Christ can have this blessed hungering given. We are living in a period in which events foretold are fulfilling with great celerity. God's faithful ones, as a rule, are waking up as never before to search the whole counsel of God. It is true many years ago Sir Isaac Newton put by his philosophical studies two entire years, to give undivided attention to prophecy, and said, 'The giving ear to the prophets is a fundamental character of the true Church ; for God has so ordered the prophecies that in the latter days the wise may understand, but the wicked shall do wickedly, and none of the wicked shall understand. Among the old prophets, Daniel is most distinct in order of time, and easiest to be understood ; and, therefore, in those things which relate to the last times, he must be made a key to the rest.'

"Yes, yes," said the senator. "I found that the second chapter of Daniel was indeed a key. Sometimes it is called the alphabet of prophecy. And we are never at a loss for a miracle, if we will but put ourselves in sympathy with God's movements, and watch for the fulfilling of his word. Prophecy fulfilling is indeed the miracle of the ages, the proof that Jehovah reigns. Will it be possible for the Roman

power, think you, to regain what it has lost of political authority?"

"I do not see how it can, judging from its portrait given in God's Word," replied the lady. "There is said to be ten times as much space allotted to the description of papal Rome as to any other of the beasts that desolate the earth. We find in Daniel, Chap. vii., that the saints are given into his hand for twelve hundred and sixty days, or years—a day in prophecy standing for a year,—and then that the judgment shall sit, and they — the court of heaven— shall take away his dominion, to consume and destroy it unto the end. And Paul in Thessalonians says, 'Whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and destroy with the brightness of his coming.'"

"Spirit of his mouth, — what do you understand by that?" asked the senator.

"It must be the sword of the Spirit," was the reply, — "the Word of God. In the papal persecutions that Word was put down, and those that dwelt on the earth rejoiced and sent gifts to each other; but God's witnesses revived, the Reformation arose, and now Protestants are one hundred and fifty million strong. Looking at the fulfilling, it appears that the consuming by the spirit of his mouth is a gradual consumption and lessening of power. Not that Romanism is to be wholly destroyed in this way, for it will be alive and on the earth when the Lord descends from

heaven to gather his people, and destroy it with the brightness of his coming."

"Ah, yes! I see," said the senator. "This consumption of Rome has been going on for many years. Like the individual 'in the last stages,' it is unaware that it is in consumption, an unfailing symptom attendant on the disease."

"Yes, it is certainly failing," replied the lady, "although it has the peculiar tenacity of life of the old-fashioned consumption. Wherever the Bible is read and pondered, Rome has less and less influence. Once all Europe dreaded the Pope; now he is scorned and ridiculed, especially in Italy, his seat and centre of dominion. The people remember how they and their children have had the key of knowledge taken away; how they have been reared in ignorance and crime; how their daughters have been duped by the clergy, cajoled into convents to be deceived and betrayed. The disgust and hatred of the Italians is intense, and they will give no quarter to a power that is fitly called, in the Word of God, 'the abomination that maketh desolate.' The contrast between Italy of to-day and Italy of thirty years ago is marvellous."

"You refer to religious liberty?"

"Yes, In 1850, Pope Pius IX. called the Bible 'poisonous reading,' and required all priests to denounce it. It is related that a Protestant clergyman in Italy, on losing his wife, wanted to put a text of scripture on her tomb-stone. The Pope would not

hear of it. 'She died a heretic,' said he. What right had she to have a hope of immortality expressed on her tomb-stone? It was, moreover, contrary to law to publish in the sight of the Roman people any portion of the Word of God. The Bible, Romanism acknowledges as her greatest enemy. It caused the reformation. It is in the ascendant. Never again will these two witnesses, the Old and New Testament, be overcome. Too many copies of the Bible are spread over the earth for Romanism ever to regain her old reign of darkness. Besides, she has but a little space in which to work and fill up the measure of her iniquities. In prophecy, as any child of God may see, who will take pains to search her record, she occupies the feet and toes of world-power dominion, and is partly broken (brittle). See margin in Daniel ii. Now, mark the change in Italy," continued the lady. "Thousands of copies of the Bible are sold every day, and Protestant churches and schools are being multiplied right under the shadow of the Vatican, and the Pope is powerless to harm them. He may well call himself a prisoner, and look for some more congenial abode. This is a part of the process of consumption. As he bewails his lost estate, why can he not see that the hand of the Lord is upon him, in cutting off his political strength — 'flesh being burnt as if by fire?' It does really seem as if the Pope and his admirers were given up to strong delusion to believe a lie, because they do not love the truth."

“It is a fearful judicial punishment,” said the senator, “to be left to the darkness and chains of the pit, because one hates what is allied to God and heaven. I saw from the first reading of the book that you sent me that Babylon the great is only another name for Rome, and that she has fallen more deeply into sin since her claim of infallibility.”

“No doubt of it,” was the lady’s reply. “The fall is a moral one, as we read, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. Her last sins are capping the climax. As a corrupt church and political power she is hastening to her doom.”

“Even after the fall of Babylon, it appears that some of God’s children are there,” said the senator, ‘for his call is, ‘Come out of her, my people, that ye become not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.’”

“Yes,” rejoined the lady, “and if he calls them out, will not the way be fully opened, and they be influenced to come out? And as he works by human instrumentality, will he not set apart his children for this service, and give them all needed grace and wisdom to reach those in the bondage of Rome?”

“I doubt not he will,” was the senator’s response. ‘I feel great compassion towards those I have left behind; and madam since, I have means and leisure, I shall do all in my power to reach thoughtful Romanists, by showing them the Lamb of God, the times in

which we live, and the character of the power that holds them in subjection. I have my heart stirred also to have associations started to welcome reformed priests. Many would venture to follow their convictions, if thus encouraged. We must be vigilant ; it was while men slept that the enemy sewed tares. If the warning the prophecies give had been heeded, and God's people awakened, the plottings of the treacherous Jesuits would have been checked—and they would not now be grasping at the throat of the nation's liberty, — the public schools. The alarm must be widely sounded."

"It must, indeed," replied Mrs. Leavenworth. "Earnest Christians and the government must take in the situation, and in the strength of the Lord banish the usurpers."

"Yes, indeed. Men that plot treason should be treated as criminals," said the senator.

The conversation was here interrupted by a committee meeting in the adjacent parlor, which required the presence of Mrs. Leavenworth and her daughter Grace. The senator was invited to make himself at home in the library and reading-room, of which he was the most liberal donor. Meanwhile, Ella Southbury, having found her vocation, was at peace, even having a song of praise in her heart.

VI.

The Dwarf and his Charge.

SOME days after the chat on Mrs. Byington's veranda, Grace, Florence and Louise were walking in the Public Garden around the pond, admiring the fountain on one side and the fine array of flowers on the other. The grateful shade of a Linden near by attracted them, and finding seats they were soon engaged in conversation.

A dwarf appeared with a hand-organ, and began to play, a lovely little girl collecting the money. She had a worried look, and seemed old for one so small. The young ladies were preoccupied, and at first scarcely noticed the new comers.

Ella Southbury's disappearance had startled both Florence and Louise, and caused many unsatisfactory queries. Mrs. Byington knew from the Colonel's manner that her protégé was safe, but she hushed up the matter; did not speak of her, or even dare inquire where she was, as she wished to have nothing to reveal, and to keep Louise and the rector in the dark about Ella's retreat.

Grace wisely kept her own council and, fortunately, was not questioned.

Mrs. Byington was still foolish enough to feel flattered by the politic letter of Father Buhler, and Louise very naturally shared her mother's opinion.

"Girls," said Louise, as they sat there under the Linden, "I had that evening, for politeness' sake, to appear to side with the Colonel, or he'd think I was horrid. But since then I've been talking with Rector Van Allstyn, and he says mamma and I do quite right to take sides with the clergyman when he does us a kindness. It is very rude not to appreciate such delicately achieved attentions. We shall soon relapse to barbarism, he says, if we allow ourselves to be boorish when the clergy show us civility and the highest style of courtesy. The rector was eloquent on the subject, and I could not resist his reasoning. I still think as mamma does, that Father Buhler is very courteous."

"I have little faith in his sincerity," remarked Grace.

"I don't see why," cried Louise, in alarm.

"Well, for this reason: he claims that all heretics are accursed, and to be destroyed when the church has the power. Aunt Byington is a heretic,—how then, in sincerity, can he wish her peace and prosperity?"

"I'm sure I do n't know; but it seems that he

did," replied Louise, of the same opinion still; "and you may be sure what he does is right. Madame Du Pont used to say that she regarded the clergy as infallible as the Pope himself!"

"Very likely," replied Grace, decisively.

Florence laughed at the idea of infallibility in either case, but turned it off by saying to Grace,—

"I noticed that the count thought the letter was all right."

"He seemed inclined to take a charitable view without inquiring into the case," returned Grace, smilingly.

"Yes, indeed," said Florence.

"It would be useless to attempt to repeat the farce in this vicinity," observed Grace.

"Of course," said Florence; "and besides it takes too much money."

"The majority of the gentlemen voted the letter a fraud," returned Grace, "and with good reason. But here comes the musician."

The organ-grinder had finished his entertainment for the group opposite, and now came round on the gravelled walk and commenced playing near the young ladies, the little child Elsaë keeping imperfect time with her accompaniment.

"What a beautiful child!" exclaimed Florence.

"She may be stolen!"

"I would n't wonder," said Louise. "It's too bad!"

"I think that the dwarf is honest," was Grace's decision. "The little girl trusts and clings to him."

The quick ear of Paul Merrill caught the drift of what was said, and he flushed to the eyes. As he played tune after tune, however, he gradually regained his composure. At length the little girl whispered to him that she was tired, and going to each person present, mutely appealed for the customary pennies, after which the two turned and left.

The park was alive with humanity. Here, there, everywhere on the many walks that flanked and interlaced it, were men, women and children making the most of the shady retreat. The dwarf and his charge wended their way through the motley crowd, as usual attracting much attention. Paul was acting the part of a protector to Elsae, yet furtively glanced around, wishing to avoid notice. As they hastened on, they ran against a lady with a pet lap-dog, which she was leading with a blue ribbon. The dog growled and snapped at the child, and was pushed one side by the dwarf.

"Be done!" screamed the woman, "or I'll call the police!"

"The dog was biting the little girl," explained Paul.

"But he is such a pretty little thing," pleaded Elsae, "he did not mean to hurt me."

"Where did you get that child?" rudely asked the

owner of the pet, as she took him up and cuddled him in her arms.

“That is my affair!” said Paul grandly, “I am her rightful guardian, and shall permit no one to harm her.”

The woman shrank away from heroic Paul, and Elsae said,—

“O Paul, how nice it would be to have a little dog to play with!”

“Would you like to have that cross beast, Elsae?”

“No, no, not that woman’s dog. But when we find some good one, that’s lost, come trotting ’long, all alone, won’t you let me call him?”

“Yes, yes, little one,” replied Paul; “but we must try to find your sister Anna, first.”

“Oh, I want to see my Anna!” cried the child. “Will it be great way to find her? Can we get there to-night? I’m so tired, Paul. Wish you’d carry me as you used to. You’re lame and tired, but could n’t you get a carriage for me, like those big babies have? I’ll sit just as still, and be so light, you could draw me just as easy!”

Paul’s heart overflowed as he said,—

“I’d like to do the handsome thing by you, for the sake of the kind mother that loved you, and for your own sake, too, little one.”

Then to himself, “It’s a home that you are needing, poor child. May the kind Father above guide to that same.”

The child's worn dress and shoes witnessed that she needed a mother's care. Weary of trudging the streets, she longed to nestle in kind sheltering arms and go to sleep.

A strong wind rising, dark clouds gathered and brooded overhead, while vivid lightning and heavy thunder heralded the storm.

Paul looked around for a shelter, the timid little one clinging to his hand. With rapid steps they reached the eastern side of the grounds, the embowering willows in the corner offering the hospitality of a temporary roof.

Meanwhile the park was cleared of visitors ; all had some home, save our wanderers, who cowered beside the trunk of the most patriarchal of the trees, which proved a defence from the angry gusts, as the wind swayed and surged the heavy masses of sea-green foliage.

"Will father find us?" asked the little girl, quaking more in terror of her unnatural parent than of the storm. "Is the fire made, and will the dinner be ready? Oh, where 's my Anna?" she burst out crying heart-brokenly, as her many sorrows came to mind.

"There, there, don't cry. The dinner is almost ready, and you shall have all you want, when this blow is over," said he kindly.

"Thank you, good Paul," murmured the child

through her tears. "I'm glad the dinner is ready, for I'm so hungry."

Happily the force of the storm was spent before it reached them, and the willow-thatched roof shielding them well, they soon emerged into the "clear shining after rain."

As he led Elsaë, Paul was apprehensive. A pang shot through his honest heart as he thought of the delicate child, and his incapacity suitably to care for her.

He talked the matter over with himself, —

"What will I do with her? How I wish the kind shelter of an orphan's home would brood her till these troubles are over."

But as he turned from the willows, he had no idea where such a place could be found. The suspicious looks and words that he had met in the park, distressed him, and he knew not what to do. He hastened as rapidly as his limping gait and load would permit toward the main thoroughfare of the city, Elsaë hurrying beside him, pinched with hunger. They soon reached a restaurant, the windows of which beckoned to passers by with an attractive display of food, fruit and candies. The two entered, Paul getting leave to deposit his organ, and passing through the confectionary department, they came to a long room lined on each side with curtained recesses. -

"Come, little one, take this seat," said Paul, help-

ing her to a place by the narrow marble table, "and I'll sit near you and cut up your food."

Then consulting the bill of fare, —

"You shall have a dinner of roast turkey, to drive the hunger away."

"Oh, yes, good Paul, quick ; please, I'm so hungry and tired. I did n't sleep nice away from Anna, and the cold breakfast made me sick."

Paul shivered with emotion and said, —

"It's a shame, honey, that you are forsaken, and left to suffer."

He then gave the order to the young lady waiter, and the famished travellers were speedily devouring their repast.

Paul, however, saw that he was pursued with suspicion even in the quiet of the eating house, and feared that he should be arrested for kidnapping.

"I cannot take her with me any more, that's settled. But where can I leave her, and who will care for her while I am on my tramps with the organ? She has led me a pretty chase, and I am trapped into this sharp-eyed city to meet with trouble and ruin."

Paul's reverie went on, —

"She is every inch a lady. Small hands and feet, high blood like her noble mother, who is sleeping her last sleep."

"Paul," said Elsae, interrupting his train of thought, "why don't we go and find my sister Anna?"

“We will directly,” replied he. “Why don’t you eat your turkey? You do n’t eat as much as a little bird. Eat and you ’ll grow well and strong, and help Paul find Anna.”

The child had enjoyed her dinner better than her protector feared. He now ordered a glass of milk and a slice of plum-pudding, and urged her to eat and grow.

“Paul,” whispered Elsae, “you did n’t say our Faver grace; say it, and I’ll eat a little more.”

The dwarf said a few words in a low voice, Elsae listening reverently.

“Our Faver in heaven don’t forget we are His children,” said she. “I remember you told me that, Paul.”

“You are a great scholar to remember my lesson. You ’ll never be worried if you keep that in mind.”

“But, Paul, don’t you ever let anybody take me away from you, till we find Anna, will you?”

Tears came into Paul’s eyes, and he bent over his plate as if taken up with his dinner, as the little one went on,—

“If any one tries to take you away from me, I shall tell God, and He wo’n’t let them.”

“No, no, He wo’n’t let them,” echoed Paul.

As he went to pay his bill, he asked the women at the counter if the child could remain while he was out on an errand. Then going back to the table he

explained to Elsaë that he must leave her a short time to look for a place to spend the night.

“Oh, do n't, good Paul ; I 'fraid. Don't leave me here all alone,” she sobbed.

“You forget who can take care of you,” returned he. “There, now, wipe away your tears ; be a good girl, stay here, and take care of my organ till I come. Lie down on this seat behind the table, and go to sleep. The angels will watch over you, and I'll be back and wake you in a jiffy.”

Elsaë was a reasonable child, and smiles took the place of tears, as she bade Paul good-by, and composed herself for a nap.

Well was it that he went forth alone, for scarcely had he turned the corner, to seek a safe covert in the outskirts of the city, when one whom he most dreaded to meet with the child passed him in a carriage from the depot. It was Stilling and his daughter Anna.

Paul recognized the dark face and trim beard of the man, the more readily as he was once his valet and man-of-all-work. The face was turned from him, and he was positive that he did not see him.

But the discovery of his proximity, and that his child Anna was with him in the carriage, caused Paul to elect himself a detective for the purpose of getting information of Stilling's movements.

“I wish my wit had n't come too late,” exclaimed Louise, as the three gained the house and were sheltered from the rain. “I ought to have taken the

dwarf and the little child home, and had mother see them. Would n't she coddle that child !”

“I thought of it,” said Florence ; “but as your mother has a house full of company, said nothing.”

“I planned to keep an eye on them, and see what could be done,” said Grace ; “but they were swept away by the crowd, and the storm coming up, they probably sought the nearest shelter. They will, I think, be in the neighborhood for some days, and it is likely that we shall see them again.”

“It is strange that the dwarf has charge of the child, is n't it ?” asked Florence.

“Yes,” replied Grace. “I would like to inquire into the matter. The little girl is very beautiful, and I could scarcely keep my hands off her. I noticed that he was very kind to her, and she seemed to confide in him. Through some mishap the child has been left to his care. I tried to get a chance to speak to them, when the storm separated us, and we hastened in. I told Aunt Byington at once, and she sent James to find them, but he did not succeed.”

“As you say,” replied Florence, “it is likely that we shall meet them again.”

“Oh, yes,” said Louise, “the organ-grinder has not half canvassed this place yet.”

“I shall never feel quite at rest till I find the two, and learn if there is any thing I can do for them. The little girl needs a mother's care,” said Grace, thoughtfully.

“Of course,” replied Florence, laughing, “you’ll get up another Aid Society for such tramps, small and otherwise.”

“If I can save suffering, I shall be sure to do it,” was the reply, with a cheery laugh.

VII.

Disposēd . of .

THE true and the counterfeit are found side by side . From the time when Abel brought an acceptable offering to the Lord, and Cain substituted something not in God's order, and was not accepted, there have been the true and false worshippers,— God's people and world-wide idolaters. In the Christian Age the church has been counterfeited, — a substitution of rare Satanic art, devised, if possible, to deceive the very elect, by outward semblance, by signs and wonders. Within, it is full of dead men's bones, and all uncleanness, and the child of God that for a time is ensnared, is rejoiced to get free.

Infidelity, lawlessness and every evil work are the legitimate fruits of this anti-Christian system, whose Jesuitical apostles tamper with and indorse crime. Stilling was an unresisting exponent of what an education from distorted text-books and a false religion can do in the way of encouraging natural depravity, being led captive of Satan at his will.

His family and abilities had given him positions of trust, while in the old country, but in business, success was prevented by his defaulting disposition.

Although he managed for a time to avoid detection, he could not quiet suspicion. At last, in some transaction with a premier, he failed in good faith, and was relegated to America to start anew in life. He was in disgrace, although not publicly. The prince nobly preferred to give him a chance to retrieve his character.

His exile he accomplished in a way most gratifying to himself, — taking his wife, who was wealthy, his two children and a servant with him. While in England, his companion sickened and died. Arriving in America, he became known as a wine merchant, having the secret of making a variety of choice brands from certain vials which he carried in his valise.

Having a few thousands on hand to invest, he soon had a family wine store in full blast, — besides a beer garden in New York, and saloons in Boston. He was also one of a syndicate to buy breweries. He paid little attention to his children, — and had not the servant, Paul Merrill, had more compassion than their father, they would have perished.

He had courteous manners, and was gifted in conversation, and soon became popular with the liquor class; and in California, partly because of his princely bearing, they delighted to honor him and call him Count.

It became necessary, he thought, to advance his interests, to ignore his children, Anna ten, and Elsaë six years of age, as he wished to secure their mother's property. He was equal to the emergency. He would secrete the children, under assumed names. Quite opportunely, for his purpose, Elsaë, the younger, fell a victim to scarlet fever while he was absent in California. This story the boarding mistress told him, and sent her off with Paul, as she had some suspicion of Stilling's plans. The very day that Paul appeared with Elsaë, Stilling took a trip to get, and dispose of, his daughter Anna. Reaching his destination at an early hour, he had the child hastily made ready, hustled her into the hack with her trunk, and took his place beside her.

"Oh, please, father, where are you taking me?" cried Anna, in low, imploring tones. "Dear mother did n't want to leave Germany, and she died. Shall I die among the strange people too?"

"Hush! hush!" cried he, with livid face of suppressed anger. "Hush! it will be better for you if you never mention Germany. And, listen to me, there are reasons why you must never speak of your mother again."

This was a terrible blow to the loving, sensitive heart of the little girl. Never speak of her idolized mother! But she would think of her all the more, and, by and by, she would go and dwell with her in the beautiful land. She might not speak her mother's

name, but surely she might talk about her little sister, from whom she had been so suddenly parted. She was bound to her with a love stronger than death.

"I promised her that I would always love and take care of my little Elsa!" she faltered. "Oh, what shall I do? Where shall I find her?"

"Hush! hush!" hissed the man. "You've been told that she was dead and buried, — the landlady told you so."

"They say she died," sobbed Anna, "but they did not let me see her after she was dead, and I never knew she was sick, and how can I believe it?"

"It is hard to think her dead," replied he, more calmly, "but she is dead all the same. And now, Anna, you must remember another thing, and that is, you must not call me 'father' again!" and his dark, magnetic eyes were fixed on the child as if they would indelibly imprint the command.

"Will you truly remember, and never call me 'father' again as long as you live?"

"I vell nevar call you '*vater*' no more!" she sobbed, as the tears coursed down her cheeks. "Shall I say '*mon pere*'?"

"No! no! Stop your crying this instant! Can't you comprehend? I don't want you to claim relationship to me in either English, German, or French. It would be at a great loss for me to own you for my child," he added, more calmly, "such is the state of things in this country. And you are not my child."

remember, only a child I adopted. There is great commotion, and it is necessary for me to put you in the mill to work for your living."

Anna held her breath in dismay of this unknown terror.

"Besides," he went on, "if you should dare to say I was your father, I must make declaration to the authorities that I am only your guardian, as I have exhausted all my monies in providing for you and your sister. You are neither of you worth a stiver. If the policemen find this out, they will put you in an insane asylum or a poor-house. In that manner do they provide for poor children in this distracted country. Alas! it matters not how virtuous and good they may be. It is money that rules in this land," sighed this counterfeit of a man.

The little girl was bewildered with fear.

"Though you may not see me," Stony Heart continued, "I shall always keep an eye on you, and know what you say and do. If you should tell what I charge you to keep secret, I shed tears when I think what would happen. To insure your safety, I shall change your name, and you are Mary Burt, and I am only Count Stilling, the friend of your father, who died in the war."

What with the mystery, the threats, and the tears, poor Anna was utterly dazed.

Once more he sought to impress her with his power, and pointing to the long line of towering factories, said with a grand air, —

“The man who owns those brick palaces has more power than a king, but his power is not so great as mine! See to it, Mary, that you tell no tales.”

She could only shrink appalled from his stern gaze.

“Driver,” he called, putting his head out of the window, “stop at Madison Mill.”

“And this is that same, your honor,” said he, reining in his horses before a lofty edifice.

Stilling stepped from the hack, and leaving the child to get out alone, had a moment’s talk with the driver, who agreed to take charge of Mary Burt’s baggage till the mill-bell rang at night, when she would know where she was to board.

As Anna stood waiting in the mill-yard, with the memory of her father’s dreadful words haunting her, and the fear of the strange, dark future before her, she was as if in a frightful dream.

The hackman drove off, saying, “I ’ll see your baggage at your boarding-place, Mary Burt.”

Stilling entered the maple-shaded mill-yard, and strode up the gravelled path to the door that led to the counting-room. It was noon, and groups of people were passing in, and standing opposite the desk of the pay-master in the room adjoining.

“Is Mr. Blake, the superintendent, in?” inquired Stilling, as he entered the counting-room.

“He is not; he is in New York to-day,” replied the gentlemanly foreman. “Will you be seated, sir?”

“Thank you,” replied Stilling, “I will sit a moment,” in his most affable style, a striking contrast to his hard ways in the carriage. “I am sorry my friend, Mr. Blake, is absent.” Lowering his voice, he said to the foreman, “I wrote him about a little girl I picked up,—this orphan, Mary Burt. She has the qualities to make a good mill-hand, and as she is alone in the world, I thought it a worthy deed to introduce her to your busy microcosm,” and he ended with a gracious smile.

“Thank you, thank you, sir,” replied the foreman, impressed by the condescending manner of the stranger. “Shall I tell Mr. Blake who called?”

“I beg pardon, sir, Mr. Blake knows me. Here is my card.”

The foreman took and read it.

“JOHANN STILLING, COUNT, F. R. S. LL. D.,
“Imperial Counsellor and Secretary to His Royal
Highness and Aulic Counsellor to the Grand
Duke of Baden.”

“Oh, ah, indeed!” said the foreman, overcome with the presence of the august personage.

“I will trouble you, sir, to see that this child has work given her according to her years, and is directed to a suitable boarding-place, Catholic preferred. My urgent official duties forbid further delay.”

“Boarding-place, your honor?” asked Lizzie O’Connor, a gem of an Irish girl, in rich sweet tones, an operative who had come in with a note for the foreman.

The count looked silently down upon her from the height of his sublimity, and having given the matter in hand to his new-made deputy, the foreman, motioned him to reply.

“Yes, Miss Lizzie,” said the courteous official, “Why do you ask?”

“My neighbor, Mrs. Bryan, is wanting a boarder, sir.”

“Ah, is she? That will be just the place for the young thing. Much better than putting her in a boarding-house. Will you see that she goes there with you to-night? Mary Burt, this is your friend Lizzie O’Connor. Lizzie, you may find her work in your room, till further orders.”

“Thank you kindly, sir. I will befriend the little girl.”

Count Stilling made a stately bow to the foreman, and without the least leave-taking of his child, went his way. Anna saw him go, with a sense of relief, and yet her grieved heart was sinking with the dread of meeting strangers.

Thus parted the father and the child—as he supposed his only child,—and hidden by the crowd around the paymaster’s desk, Paul Merrill saw and heard all, as he thought it duty to watch Stilling.

Lizzie O’Connor was a ruddy damsel of sixteen, working in the mill for awhile, from choice. She was a charming child of nature,—a rare specimen of vigorous health. Her brown hair was curly, and fashion

or no fashion she would wear it in the most becoming way. There was the soul of kindness in her eyes, and when she smiled, which was on the slightest pretext, she had dimpled cheeks that a city belle might envy.

Her father, Patrick O'Connor, joined the Union army in the late war; being thoroughly loyal and brave, he soon rose to the position of major, and, at the close of the war, when peace was declared, settled in a manufacturing suburb of the growing city. He was a skilled machinist, and holding a responsible place in a large factory, made and saved money, and investing in town lots, became very wealthy. Although a foreman in the machinist department of the mammoth mill, he was owner of many stores and dwelling houses, all built under his direction, without the loss of one hour from his regular business.

Lizzie was an only daughter, and had she wished she might have led an idle life. It was no part of her father's plan to have her work in the mill, but inheriting from him and her thrifty mother a tireless energy, she was blessed with genuine love of labor. Light-hearted and gay as a lark, singing wherever she went, she must be busy or she was out of her element. She begged her parents to let her work a part of the year, and they could not deny her what made her so happy. School-life she also enjoyed exceedingly, and was a leader in her class in the public school, and when vacation came, just gambolled in her easy post in the mill. She bore with her so much

enthusiasm that she soon excelled and became forewoman in the cloth-room, where she took her new friend, and showed her how to pick the slivers and imperfections from the cloth.

"Jolly, is n't it, Mary?" asked Lizzie, dimpling with joy, that she could initiate another into her loved labor.

As she deftly handled the cloth, meanwhile sharply watching that Anna did her task well, her mirth-inspiring ways lighted up the sober faces in that room like the sunlight.

Some of the operatives had grown gray in the service; some had home burdens pressing them down, which, added to long continued monotonous labor, made the clang and din of shuttle and gearing almost unendurable. When will some genius take pity on the ears and nerves of worn-out mill people, and invent a noiseless substitute for excruciating cogs?

It was a happy thing that Lizzie could help dispel the clouds that brooded over several women who had assumed the martyr air of a tread-mill existence. They forgot themselves in an assumed anxiety for the mirthful forewoman.

"You'll spoil your work if you caper and cut up in that way, Lizzie," said a thin, elderly lady.

"Will I?" was the lively reply. "Who works better than I? I am bound to have the prize in the mill, as well as in school!"

This new life of working for a living struck our

friend Anna as very pleasant, so much did the happy ways of Lizzie brighten it. The girl was a universal favorite, and as the two at six o'clock trudged toward Mrs. Bryan's cottage, amid a streetful of operatives, many were the blessings invoked upon her.

"Don't be after hurrying so," exclaimed a neighbor, trying to keep pace with her. "Take your time, Lizzie; there's luck in leisure."

Thus blithely chatting on their way, we leave them, while we take a peep into Mrs. Bryan's cottage, soon to be Anna's boarding-place.

VIII.

A. Surprise. Visit.

WHEN Dr. Christie next called at Mrs. Bryan's cottage, he was depressed and half sick. He had had a succession of night cases, his wife was ill, debts pressed, and he felt more like being doctored than exerting himself in his profession. Although of a cheery temperament, he was almost ready to repine.

"Verily the wicked flourish," thought he. "There is that scamp Buhler, he has an easy berth, a good living, no debts to haunt him, no sick cases troubling his dreams, while I work like a dog, with spare pay, and many of my patients dead-heads. If I were doing genuine mission-work, and helping the deluded, it would be some comfort; but the few words that I drop are like pearls before swine, and I am simply helping the Romish Church. This will never do. I feel traitorish when I so freely aid those that are ready to destroy our free institutions."

In this strain of reflection, the doctor rang the bell,

and was again ushered into Mrs. Bryan's buff cottage with brown blinds. It was a pretty place, situated on a wide street bordered with shade trees, and flowering front yards.

Mrs. Bryan met him with a bright smile, —

“Good morning, doctor.”

“Good morning. How is the young lady, this morning?”

“Oh, she's happy as a lark. Come right in.”

He found his patient sitting up in her arm-chair and looking much better. After kindly greetings, she said, —

“Doctor, I have found out that mother has been paying the priest five dollars whenever he called to say his abominable prayers, although I stopped my ears every time, it was such a profanation to hear them, and only endured them till dear mother's eyes should be opened, —but we have not paid you one cent. You have been here twenty times, and I owe you forty dollars!”

“Oh, no,” said the doctor, the tears starting in his expressive eyes. “I could not think of taking more than half-price, which would be twenty dollars.”

“But you must take the right price,” earnestly replied Mary, “or you can never come here again,” and she handed him the money.

The physician was much affected, for that morning a bill of forty dollars came in, which he had no means to pay.

"Now, Miss Mary, I did not expect pay from you," said Dr. Christie. "In the circumstances I cannot feel it right to take so much. You will need all your means for comforts in your sickness."

"Never mind, doctor," said Mary; "I am provided for. The money you have earned in attending me is sacredly yours, and I shall not consent to keep any part of it from yourself and family."

"No, indeed, doctor, we could not think of taking your services without pay," chimed in Mrs. Bryan. "We've been paying Father Buhler five dollars a week, right along, and we've decided to stop and give you a chance!"

The doctor was astonished at the trickery of the priest, who told him that Mary had no means whatever.

"Well," said he, in reply to Mrs. Bryan, "may you never have cause to regret it."

"There's no danger of that," replied Mary, "for it is only doing right, and I have great confidence that I am to get well, since you always pray over your cases."

"I've faith in medicine, when God blesses it," said the doctor, "and I have had some remarkable answers to prayer, and if you have faith to be healed, we will look for brighter days."

"I have faith," replied Mary cheerily, "and I feel new life in my veins. God has heard prayer, because we take Him at His word, and praise His name. I

do believe that I am really well," and she rose and walked across the room to the surprise of the doctor and her mother.

"Why, Mary, how well you look!" exclaimed Mrs. Bryan, the tears springing to her eyes. "The sickness has left you, my darling! It is the hand of the Lord, and I believe in your religion!"

The doctor cordially shook her hand, and took leave, too happy and grateful for words.

The door bell rang, and Lizzie O'Connor entered with Anna, to introduce her to her boarding-place.

"Good morning, Mrs. Bryan," said she, brightly. "I've brought you the boarder you were asking for. Her name is Mary Burt."

"Why, how do you do, Mary Burt?" said Mrs. Bryan. "You're the fine picture of a child; I am very glad to see you. Come right in, and take off your things. We'll have dinner soon, when my brother comes from the mill." But she gazed lovingly on her as she thought her like her daughter of the same age whom she buried two years before.

Mary Bryan took her into her heart-confidence at once, for it seemed like having her lost sister back again.

She showed her her room and where to put her things, and the child began to feel at home directly, and as Lizzie left, she said, "I'll call for you a little before one o'clock and we'll go back to the mill together. Good-by till I come," added she, cheerily.

Mary Bryan was so kind and loving that the new boarder wanted to tell her the sorrows that oppressed her. But the dread of her father was on her, and it was hard to overcome her depression, although others were happy about her.

Mary Bryan was really healed of her sickness, and there was a great wave of joy in the cottage, and as the family sat down to dinner, she said grace very fervently, — “O Jesus, I do thank Thee that Thou hast healed me. Bless this food, and give us grateful hearts.”

This in a Catholic household, and Mr. Bryan, the brother-in-law, in full sympathy with Mary's joy and gratitude.

“I want you to tell me all about it when I come home to-night,” said he. “It is a marvel of healing, — such a sick body as you were, too !”

“The Lord healed me,” said Mary softly and reverently. “With Him all things are possible.”

“I believe it !” replied her uncle. “You are made well, and you were going right down in consumption.”

“Well, praise God I am all right now, — and this food is delicious !”

“I believe God heard prayer for you, darling, because we paid the praying doctor and sent off the grasping priest,” said the mother, a new light in her eyes.

“Did you pay Dr. Christie ?” asked Mr. Bryan.

“Yes, I paid him this morning,” said Mary Bryan.

“It was a good thing that you did,” he replied, “for I know that he is in trouble, because so many of our people call him in, and do not pay him. He ought to be paid every time he calls. If everybody would do that, he would get along nicely, and would not be worried by the wolf at the door.”

“How smiling everybody is, and how happy we all are!” said Mrs. Bryan, as she helped serve the food.

“It is a day long to be remembered,” said Mary, “I can now go back to my school. How delightful it is to be well again! I never was so happy!”

Happiness is infectious, and Anna forgot for a little her burden, in the general rejoicing. She had indeed found a refuge in a restful home, where love and kindness were abundant and overflowing.

IX.

Elsæ's Asylum.

PAUL, still intent on watching the Count, followed him from Madison Mill as he strode down the street and stepped into a saloon to console himself with a glass of beer, then sauntered to a shady seat in the adjacent park.

As Stilling was fanning himself with his hat, the dwarf suddenly touched his shoulder. He started, and a look of amazement came over his face.

"Ah, Paul, is it you?" he cried, excitedly.

"It is me," replied Paul, with manly independence, — "a live set of flesh and bones, if you did beat me within an inch of my life."

"Oh, yes, I remember," heartily laughed Stilling; "but I always thought the world of you, Paul, and never meant any harm. You know gentlemen will forget themselves and get overcome with wine and temper sometimes. But I am willing to let by-gones be by-gones. Remember my good turns, my trusty Paul, that I was a kind master, in the main, and paid

you well. Now let me give you another token of my regard."

Paul shook his head at the bright gold piece offered him, but prudence got the better of contempt, as he thought of the children, and he accepted it.

Stilling had the faculty of calming the anger of those whom he had injured, and a well-poised will it was that could withstand his influence, enforced by his smooth tongue.

"What brought you here? What can I do for you?" asked he, cordially.

"I made an oath to your lady, when her soul was passing, that I'd never forsake the children. Where can I find them?"

"In the graveyard," replied Stilling, in well-feigned grief.

Paul seemed overcome as Stilling opened his heart to him, saying that he was all alone in the world, and longed for Paul to return to him as his confidential servant. He confided to him that he was so desolate that he had decided to marry Miss Leavenworth, an accomplished heiress, even pointing out Byington Mansion, where she was stopping, not far from his hotel. Laden with information, Paul rose to go, Stilling begging him to call at his hotel, and he would engage his services.

Paul hurried away to the restaurant which sheltered one of the Count's "buried children." He found the child afraid something had befallen him.

“See here,” he said, “I’ve something nice for you. I shall never forget you, while there is a beat to my heart or breath in my body.”

Elsae smiled brightly through her tears.

“Now,” said Paul, “you must eat this fruit, and I’ll come back soon, and we’ll go and take a walk.”

Then giving the child a tempting orange, he stepped into a stationer’s, next door, and asked leave to write a note. The obliging clerk gave him writing materials, and directed him to a desk.

Paul wrote as follows, —

“MISS LEAVENWORTH, — A well-wisher is hoping that you will pause before listening to the stranger, Mr. Stilling. He is a trustless man. This from one who knew him in the old country, and who is ready to testify when called upon.”

Paul then, inquiring of the clerk about Children’s asylums, found that, after application, references were required, with account of parentage. He saw that this was not to be thought of. He returned to the restaurant just as Mrs. Ranney, a shop woman, entered to purchase confectionary. Elsae ran to meet Paul, and Mrs. Ranney’s glittering eyes lighted on her. She smilingly accosted the child, giving her a stick of candy, and asked if she would not like to be her cash girl in her beautiful store a few squares off. Elsae blushed and looked pleased. Paul thought the opening worth trying, and, after inquiries, followed the woman, and before night the child was a fixture in her store on Blank Street.

“You’ll let the little one work easy, just to amuse her,” suggested Paul. “I will see to her support, if only she can have a home and kind people around her.”

“Never you fear; I will do well by her,” replied Mrs. Ranney, smilingly.

Hoping for the best, Paul left, and proceeded to arrange his business. He first found a foreigner, who was glad to hire his organ to help out his livelihood. He then sought a tailor’s establishment and obtained employment as a journeyman, for he was a rare workman in this line, having spent years at the business.

“What you staring at?” asked Mrs. Ranney, in her sharp way, as, on entering, the child surveyed the array of toys and other goods. “Did n’t you ever see any thing before? Here, come into the back room; you ain’t fit to be seen!” and she ushered her in there, and seated her on the lounge with a bounce that brought the tears into her eyes, and made her sensitive mouth quiver.

“One thing must be settled to start with,” continued she. “You are a poor child, and nobody in the wide world cares for you but me. Who is that dwarf of a man with you? is he your father?”

“No, ma’am; he’s my Paul.”

“When he comes and asks if you like me, and want to stay here, you must say that you do.”

“Yes, ma’am,” replied Elsae, in great distress.

“If you ever complain to him one word, I’ve got a

great black cat that lives in the cellar, and I 'll shut you up with her, and she 'll tear your eyes out !”

Elsae began to cry.

“ Shut up, or down stairs you go, to the black cat !”

The child was so thoroughly frightened that she did not dare even sob.

“ Can you wash yourself ? Do you know enough for that ?” Then speaking to one of the girls in the next room, “ Here, Susan, just give this child a good scrubbing, and put on the dead girl's suit you 'll find in that trunk.”

Elsae was horror-struck. Was a little girl killed by that dreadful black cat ?

Susan was fifteen, and had been taken from an orphan Home when eight years old. The report of the institution said that she had found a good place. Susan, however, could not verify this statement. She had learned to work steadily all day and was so worn down that her face had a blank, joyless look, and she moved mechanically, as if in a dream.

“ Mind you do as I say, and no words, while I attend to matters in the front shop.”

Susan's eyes filled with tears, as she led the way to the wash-stand in the recess where was a bed. The little one knew that she was sorry for her, and it eased the load on her heart.

“ Can 't I talk ?” whispered Elsae, as her face was being sponged.

Susan shook her head, and stooped to kiss her. Nobody had done that since she was with her sister Anna. Elsaë could stand it no longer, but relieved her full heart by crying, softly,—

“Oh, where’s my Anna? Take me to my Anna!”

“Hush, darling,” whispered Susan. “I’m afraid she’ll beat you, if you do n’t!”

Elsaë again smothered her sobs.

“Ca n’t I ever talk with you?” asked the child.

“Not if you can help it. She’d whip me if she knew that I talked kind to you, and it’d be the worse, for you, too.

“Ca n’t I have a doll, or some of those pretty things to play with?”

“Oh, no; them’s to sell to rich folks. But never mind, I’ll make a rag-baby out of my old apron, and you shall take it to bed, to-night.”

These words brought a ray of happiness to that little sorrowful heart.

“Come, hurry up there! It is time you were sewing again,” sharply said Mrs. Ranney, peering in. “Saint Christopher! how mortal slow you be. You might have earned lots of money for me while you’ve been dressing that child. I do wonder what such slow pokes were made for!”

At that moment the door opened, and a customer entered the front shop. Mrs. Ranney vanished and appeared at the counter smilingly, saying in her sweetest tones,—

“Oh, how do you do, Mr. Perley?” shaking his hand. “Have n’t been in town of late? Thought so; if you had been, you surely would have called. How are your benevolent enterprises getting on?”

“All right,” said the old gentleman. “We have to be benevolent for self defence in this country. We have to lay good foundations, and maintain our institutions, or everything will go to ruin.”

“Just so,” she replied, without taking his meaning.

“We cannot be civilized,” he continued, “if we do not give freely to all good enterprises.”

“So I think, Mr. Perley. I adopt a great many orphans, and bring them up to industrious habits, and then get them good places in the country.”

“That is very noble in you, I am sure, Mrs. Ranney,” he replied.

“Nobody knows the expense and labor it takes,” this rare woman went on; “but I must have the blessed privilege of doing some good in the world.”

She put her handkerchief to her eyes, as if troubled with tears.

“I am deeply interested in your self-denying efforts to help the desolate, and shall be glad to contribute my mite,” as he handed her a crisp bill.

“I thank you, kindly,” she said smilingly. “You are very generous.”

“Not at all. Do n’t be afraid to apply to me if there is any further need,” rejoined the old gentleman. “But I must now go to my train,” and with a polite bow he left.

Mrs. Ranney then called her daughter Angelina, from the work-room up stairs, to come and assist her.

"Angelina," said she, as she entered the shop, "I've picked up another nuisance of a child, and you must break her in, and see that she is busy every minute."

"I'm sick of this breaking in business," replied Angelina. "'T is n't every child that can stand all work. What is that child to do any way?"

"She is to save Susan's time. You must teach her to sweep, and dust, and put rooms in order."

"But she is so little, what can you expect of her? She must have a small broom if she is to sweep."

"Yes," replied the mother. "Get a small broom; she will learn better, and do more work."

Little Elsae was told to sweep the shop. It was getting late; she was tired, and did her best only to have it to do over again, and looked upon Mrs. Ranney as the most dreadful woman she had ever seen, and, what was worst of all, she had promised not to tell Paul. The tears kept dropping into the dust as she swept in her child-way.

Angelina helped her as much as she dared, when her mother's back was turned, but the poor little thing was very wretched. At supper time she had a dry crust, and even that had not been earned, according to Mrs. Ranney. She slept on the woodbox, in a dark closet, with a chair-cushion for a pillow, and an old shawl thrown over her. As Susan put her to bed she

did not forget to give her the rag-baby doll, and hugging it closely as if it were Anna, the grieved child was soothed, and saying her prayers, fell asleep.

X.

A. Religious Sense of Honor.

FATHER BUHLER and his sister, Madame Du Pont, were greatly attached, having been brought up together, until he studied for the priesthood. She visited at his house in vacation, and they kept alive the old home affection. He made her a confident of many of his plans. He had little faith, however, in her reasoning powers, and took the liberty of enforcing his own ideas when it suited his purpose.

“Josephine,” said he, one morning, as they sat at the breakfast table partaking of an elegant repast, “I’ve a favor to ask of you, and you must not say me nay.”

She looked up smilingly, saying,—

“Anything in reason, Herr. What can I do for you?”

“It is not so much for me,” he replied, “as for my friend, Count Stilling. You see, he has lost his wife and two children, and there is a large property coming to him through the wife, now that the children are no more.”

“Yes,” said Madame; “then I suppose he will be far more wealthy.”

“Of course he is well off now,” was the reply, “and when he comes in possession of this, he will double his property; but the business is not yet accomplished.”

“Why not?” asked Madame Du Pont.

“Well, you see he must send the proof to the trustees, or agent of the property, that his children are dead.”

“I suppose so,” rejoined Madame. “Why do n’t he send?”

“He will, just as soon as he gets it ready. His papers, certifying to the fact, must be signed. I shall sign, and I also want your signature.”

“Have I ever seen his children?” asked she, in a bewildered way. “I simply recall that he is of a distinguished family.”

“Of course, Josephine, you’ve seen them,” replied he, by way of strategy; “they were in your school, and both of them died of scarlet fever,—do n’t you remember? I really believe, Josephine, that you are losing your memory. But I want you to brush it up, and sign this document,” and he showed her a paper with blanks filled out, and with his signature affixed, certifying that Anna and Elsae Stilling died of scarlet fever at such a date, and in such a place.

“If you say so, I suppose I must do it,” said Madame, hesitatingly, as they rose from the table,

“but what if you are mistaken, and I am cited to appear in court?”

“No danger. I’ll manage it, and you shall be well rewarded for your testimony. The property is in the hands of an agent in this country, and Count Stilling comes in possession the moment that there is clear and positive proof that the children are dead.”

“I can only indorse what you say,” said Madame, helplessly. “If I am questioned as to my personal knowledge of their death, I must be silent, for I can not remember the circumstances.”

“I will take you to a lawyer, beforehand, and tell you just what questions will be asked, and what you are to answer, and you’ll find no trouble,” replied the crafty Jesuit.

“Are you sure this is honest?” she asked.

“It is perfectly honest in a religious sense, and what more can you ask?” cried he, triumphantly.

“I suppose you are right, but you do mystify me dreadfully.”

“Even if you did unconsciously commit a sin, I, a regularly ordained priest, can at once absolve you, and you become as innocent as the babe unborn.”

“That is a very convenient doctrine for some people,” laughed Madame. “But this seems allowable since you indorse it, and agree to take the consequences.”

“You’ll sign it, then?”

“I suppose so; but don’t make a mistake, and have

me sign my share of my property away, as you once tried to do, and my late husband, Monsieur Dupont, prevented."

"Now, Josephine, you've certainly a most remarkable memory! You've made a great mistake, and if he told you that, he falsified. I am the very soul of honor, as you well know."

"Ah, well," she replied, "but your sense of honor provides only for the interests of the church. My private, personal concerns would meet with little favor from you if put in competition with church claims."

"I do not complain," gaily rejoined he, "although you thus berate me. If I keep my holy vow, the church must, of course, be first," and pressing a knob, he sent for a lawyer friend, and the Count.

On their arrival, the document was signed, after which, Stilling courteously remained for conversation, as he was favorably impressed with Madame Du Pont's lady-like appearance.

"I have had great pleasure, Madame," said he, as he seated himself beside her, "in meeting two of your late pupils, Miss Fairfax and Miss Byington."

"They are charming," replied the lady. "Especially Miss Louise, who may yet become a member of a ritualistic church."

"Yes, Madame," replied Stilling. "I have noticed that she is already deeply interested in that direction."

Madame smiled sweetly on him, saying,—

“I am delighted to hear that you have observed it I have been the means of influencing numbers of young ladies to become religious. It is either society belles or devotees.”

“Being so useful must be a great gratification to you,” beamingly remarked Stilling.

“It is indeed,” replied the lady, fanning herself, “I tell my girls that as there are more women in the commonwealth than men, there is a chance that they may not marry, and they must look about and see what they can do. But I would myself never join a convent, and few smart girls can be persuaded to take the veil. It may possibly be better than to starve outside.”

“Very true,” responded Stilling; “but I protest against confining them there if they prefer to leave.”

“I coincide with your views,” exclaimed Madame Du Pont, with a winning smile.

“I do not!” cried Father Buhler, flushing. “They are fickle, and do not know their own minds. If they were let out, they would tell tales.”

“That could be managed,” replied Stilling, who sought to be on the opposite side of Father Buhler, and have an argument “If they choose to go into a cloister, let them go, and have it arranged to have it occasionally visited by certified officials, and if a nun is discontented, let her make it known, and be allowed to leave.”

“Johann Stilling! what do you mean?” cried Father Buhler. “Do you know that if our cloisters were thus visited, they would shortly disappear? They must have privacy in order to exist.”

“We must remember,” said Stilling, glancing at appreciative Madame Dupont, “that when convents were established, there was a very different state of society from what there is at the present day. What was fitting in the dark ages, is not appropriate now. Women are raised in the social scale, and insist on being educated; they cannot long be held in subjection, even if they consign themselves to a kind of slavery.

“No, no!” murmured Madame, earnestly fanning herself.

“The Government, waked up by the most influential men and women of the nation,” continued Stilling, in a burst of affected enthusiasm, “will strive to see that all the women under the flag are protected by the flag!”

“What nonsense!” cried Father Buhler. “You’d pull down our venerable church on our heads!”

“Why, I am surprised! Count Stilling is *comme il faut!*” exclaimed Madame, more than ever pleased with him.

“Keep cool, Father Buhler,” said Stilling, “and remember, whatever I say, I mean no offence, and shall never utter any treasonable sentiments outside of this house.”

“I accept your apology,” replied Buhler, mollified, “and we are friends again.” Then to Madame, “Josephine, would you be kind enough to gather some flowers from the garden,—a bouquet for our parlor, and one for the church?”

“Gladly, brother; I admire to be among the flowers,” although in her secret heart she had much rather remain where she was.

As she gracefully left, Buhler drew his chair nearer to Stilling, and said,—

“I wanted to see you alone a moment. She thinks the children are really dead, and I feared every instant that you would betray yourself. She must be allowed to think so, for she cannot keep a secret. She is so constituted, you see; she was not put up for a crafty manager, and cannot be made over.”

“Ah, yes, I see,” said Stilling. “Now a word about my affairs. When I came back with my eldest child, I acted on your hint, took her to Madison Mill, found work for her, had her name put on the pay-roll, and gave her in charge of the superintendent as Mary Burt, saying that she was an orphan I had found, and could recommend as a beginner. I also requested the man of affairs to see that she had a Catholic boarding-place, which he agreed to do.”

“That may do for awhile,” said Buhler, “until the Foundling asylum is finished. But will she keep dark about her name?”

“Her name is changed,” replied Stilling, “and she

is entered on the books as Mary Burt,— so they call her in the mill. I begin to breathe more freely, and I am under the greatest obligation to you for helping me out.”

“Don’t mention it,” said the other. “I am only too glad to serve you. How do you prosper in matrimonial plans with Miss Leavenworth?”

“Tolerably. But Miss Grace will keep me at a distance, and plainly is in no hurry to have the matter settled, yet she treats me with polite consideration. What can I do to win her admiration?”

“Well, now, Johann, this to me, a celibate priest, when you are learned in that lore, and I am supposed to know nothing about it. But I should say, find out what her preferences are, and humor them. Attend church regularly; read prayers devoutly; study her peculiarities and assimilate yourself with them. Become her very slave to win her, and with your strong will, you cannot fail to succeed.”

“There is no doubt of that,” rejoined Stilling. “But I must run over to New York to-night, and have this business squared up with the agent, draw my money, when I can launch out as is fitting; and I shall not forget you, Herr Buhler.”

“Nor I you, old fellow. Come in, on your return, and let me know how your affairs prosper. Say, you don’t find the other child, do you?”

“No signs of her,” replied Stilling. “I was told she died of scarlet fever. I doubt if she ever turns

up. If she does, it will be easy to prove her an imposter, in the face of this certificate."

"That's where you are correct. Your prospects are bright, and I prophesy a brilliant career for you as a rising man. You must go into politics, and help us that way. With your splendid presence and address, I predict that you will be sent to Congress. I can help you politically. We clergy always aim to maintain close relations with Government officials. It is our secret of working; we fawn and flatter, bribe and influence,—anything to gain the balance of power. We are a mighty political machine in good running order."

"Yes, Herr Buhler, I see that you are well posted."

"Good-by, old fellow," said Buhler, as the other rose to go.

"Good-by," rejoined Stilling.

Soon after Stilling left, Madame Du Pont came in with a quantity of lovely flowers, and as she arranged them, said nervously,—

"See here, Brother, if I sign certificates to order for you, I've a favor to ask."

"Ask away, Josephine; I'll do what I can for you to the half of my kingdom."

"You must know, then, that I want to get settled in life. I'm tired of teaching, and have given it up," plaintively explained the lady,

"How settled?" asked he, in surprise. "I

thought you were disposed of. What in time do you mean?"

"How obtuse you can be, Herr, when you try. If you must be told, I would like the attentions of Count Stilling with matrimony in view. We were getting on beautifully, when you exiled me to the garden," she said, regretfully.

Buhler roared with laughter.

"I would n't have believed this of you, Josephine. And Stilling, of all men, to fancy him!"

"Why not? Is n't he an eligible match? He has a large property, I heard you say, and our certificates helped him get a part of it. He is a magnificent looking man, and you have a very good chance for an introduction looking toward our union."

"Josephine, you are too verdant. Count Stilling would not want a wife as old as you are, to begin with."

Madame bristled up. If there was one thing more than another that she prided herself on, it was her youthful appearance.

"Old as I am? cried she. "Herr, you know that I am still young and fine looking. I do not feel or look a day older than twenty-five," as she glanced in the mirror opposite, "and no one takes me for more than that. I am still in the market, and if you choose, you could make a good match for me."

She was a fair, stout lady of forty.

"Perhaps so," was the candid answer, "but I

should hesitate about giving you to Stilling, even if he asked me for you."

"Why, pray?" asked she, in open-eyed wonder.

"Reasons enough, Josephine; he is a Jesuit, although a layman. Do n't you ever take any stock in marrying one of that order."

"Why, you 're talking against your own society! I supposed you thought its members were perfect."

"So they are for the use of the church, but that is very different from the interests of the home and family. If you study your own welfare, you'll steer clear of being linked for life to one of the order."

"I 'd run the risk in the case of Count Stilling," replied Madame. "He is perfectly fascinating. You only make me more interested in him."

"Josephine, you are foolish," returned the brother. "Count Stilling is not in the market, even. He is engaged to a lovely young heiress, and that settles it."

"Oh, yes, of course," was the disappointed reply, "unless he changes his mind."

"Which he will never do," replied the brother. "I wonder, Josephine, why you do not wake up to the chances which you have of promotion. It is true that you run one of the city branches of the church's great suburban academy and nunnery, Madonna Hall, but I regard Sister Clarissima as your superior in management, although much younger. If you would wake up, I could obtain for you an equally eligible

position, as Superioress of an establishment, and you would no longer be outdone by your younger sister."

"Herr, I do not fancy being a Superioress; it is so old-like. There's Clarissima, she is settled for life, and if she wants to make a change and marry, she is not free, she cannot get away."

"Why should she want to get away?" asked Buhler, angrily.

"Then I never could abide to enter a cloister, join a strict order, and make a lot of heartless religious vows, which I could not, with my lively, volatile nature, ever keep. I have no desire to quit the world for some time to come, if I ever do. I am too young to turn nun. I love my liberty of coming and going; I love society, dress, parties, and assemblies, far too well to take the veil."

"You obstinately stand in your own light, when you might have a magnificent situation," frowned her brother.

"I have explored that field a little," was her aggrieved response. "In the first place, after giving up the world and taking the veil," with a sob in her voice, "I have got to be subject to the notions and whims of the clergy, whoever they may be, resident or otherwise, and above that, there is the head Mother of all the convents in the United States, who resides in Cincinnati, and is Superioress of all other Superioresses in the land. She herself is amenable

to the bishop nearest at hand — of that diocese, I mean, — and he to the Archbishop, he to the Cardinal, and he, in turn, to the Pope. It is one great snarl of wheels within wheels, and one shaft, the Pope, turns them all.”

“What of that?” asked Buhler, as he walked the floor. “It only shows the perfection of the system; and to be subject to the powers that be, is the virtue and holiness that makes saints.”

“As I now teach,” continued Madame, “I am independent, and I would not part with that for the world. Another thing, I can never marry if I take the veil.”

“That’s the trouble with you, and many besides you,” replied Buhler. “You do not assimilate with the church. You think that you can arrange and manage things better far than she can; but you are very unwise and short-sighted. The church has great power and wealth, and you do well to be incorporated in it.

“Don’t urge me, Herr; I shall never really be happy until I am again settled in life, and have a home of my own, as I used to have when Monsieur Du Pont was alive.”

“Well, Josephine, you must have good courage, at your time of life, to seek a second settlement, when there is in this country such a great overplus of females.”

“At my time of life, Herr!” outspoke Madame, dis-

pleased. "Why will you harp on that string? You are aware that I pass for much younger than I am, and you ought to know better than to meddle with my age. I am very French in my make-up, as my dead husband used to say, and he did not honestly think that I should ever grow old!"

Buhler was merry over this idea, and enjoyed teasing her.

"You dress very becomingly, Josephine, and that makes all the difference; and to do you justice, you are a very good-looking woman for one of your age," and he ended with a provoking laugh.

"You are unbearable, Herr Buhler! What comfort can you take in tormenting me? I'll pack my things and go to the mountains right off, and leave you to your reflections. If I immured myself as you wish, I could never mingle in improving society; never go to any watering place, assemblies, musical soirees, lectures, or anything elevating, but mope and mourn in stupid convent walls. There are some people insane enough for such a life, but I am thankful I am not. It is, however, for my interest to stand by the church, and while I cease to fight you, when I leave, you will please remember that I shall marry the very first good opportunity," and Madame swept out of the room with an air of offended dignity, and took the next train for the White Mountains.

XI.

Enforced Obedience.

PATRICK and Margaret O'Connor were proud of their only daughter, Lizzie. She was bright, rosy, robust and energetic, making easy work of whatever she undertook. In the mill she was soon promoted to take charge of the cloth-room, where everything moved with easy precision under her wise management. This was only in vacation time, yet she became a necessity, the superintendent averred, and could not well be spared.

Nevertheless, when school-term time came, she could not be persuaded to remain longer in the factory, although the inducement of fewer hours and higher wages was tried. A ready and enthusiastic scholar, the leader of her class, no money could prevail on her to remain away from her loved teacher's instructions, and the crowning year in the high school.

The O'Connors being wealthy parishioners of Father Buhler, his eye had been on the daughter for some time. It galled him that she would attend her

chosen school, and besides she had not been to confessional for two years. These things were highly criminal, and as shepherd of his flock he must look after the wanderer.

Accordingly he called on the O'Connors, about tea-time one evening, thinking she would be at home. Greeting Mrs. O'Connor, he asked for her daughter. She was away, had gone home with a school-mate.

Covering his disappointment as far as possible, he said, —

“I charged you to have her remain in the parochial school. How dared you disobey my orders?”

“Now, Father Buhler,” replied Mrs. O'Connor, very smilingly, “it is a hard question you ask me. We wanted to please your reverence, but our child's interests prevented.”

“Do you pretend to say that the parochial school is inferior to the public school?” asked he, shocked beyond measure.

“That's what the scholars in the high school say, who have tried both schools,” was the answer. “There's Lizzie's friend, Katie, who is in the parochial school, has to learn useful knowledge evenings, of her brothers, who are in the public schools.”

“That shows how ignorant and bigoted they are!” rejoined he.

At this moment Mr. O'Connor came in, and Father Buhler beset him to take his daughter out of

her school, and send her where she would "learn something."

"Learn something!" echoed the astonished father. "How can nuns, called incompetent as teachers by one of our most learned men, teach our Lizzie? She has tried, and outgrew them years ago. When a little tot, she was head and shoulders above them. They'd try to teach her history, but she'd get books from the public library and find they did n't know. You must visit the high school and hear Lizzie say her lessons. Everybody says she is the first-rate scholar, and learns all their books clean through. Take her out of school? It would break her heart."

"The Pope requires it, and must be obeyed," was the reply.

"But that New York Father says the Pope don't dream what he is doing, when he meddles with the public schools of this country," said Patrick, with unheard-of independence.

"Did you know, my son," solemnly replied Father Buhler, "that he is an unfrocked priest, and under the ban of the infallible Pope?"

"Yes; but he seems to be alive and well, and the ban is harmless," replied Patrick, with a smile that told that his sympathies were with the condemned priest.

"Patrick O'Connor, you surprise me!" slowly and sternly rejoined Father Buhler. "You are commit-

ting a great sin in allowing your daughter to attend a public school, and you can only settle with me for it by the way of an indulgence, I permitting it on condition of your paying me a sum proportionate to the guilt. Otherwise, I might as well give a dog the sacraments as to give them to you."

"I'm ready to do the fair thing by you," said Patrick, relieved at the prospect of making his peace with the Father, but in no way convinced of the sin of helping his daughter get an education.

"What is to pay, Father?" asked he, in his pleasant way.

"I wish you to remember, my son, that this is a sin that calls loudly to heaven for vengeance, and unless atoned for by your sacrifice of money, you may expect judgments to follow your family."

"Name the sum," said Patrick; "I am not quite broke yet. Lizzie is going to graduate that school just as sure as she is alive and well, Father Buhler. I promised her that, and I never break my word with my child."

"Then for this great sin, Patrick O'Connor, I adjudge you to pay me the sum of one thousand dollars, in installments of one hundred dollars per month, the first to commence now."

Patrick took out his plethoric pocket-book, and counting bills, said,—

"Here's one hundred dollars, the first payment. Now give me my discharge in writing."

Father Buhler, tearing a sheet from his note-book, wrote, after giving the place and date,—

“Received of Patrick O’Connor, on account, one hundred dollars, in indulgence, for his daughter Lizzie’s attendance at a public school.”

“(Signed)

HERR BUHLER,

“Pastor of St. Gabriel’s Church.”

This was a fraudulent proceeding, as only a bishop can grant a license to attend a secular school.

“One thing more,” said Buhler to the mother, after Mr. O’Connor left. “I find that your child is criminally negligent as it regards coming to confessional; she has not confessed for more than two years. She is getting to be a great backslider, and it will take many a hard penance to recover her lost ground.”

“Oh, Father Buhler!” cried Margaret, “Don’t you be hard on her, seein’ we’ve paid you for her transgression. Do let dear Lizzie study her lessons and graduate in peace. She’ll make it all up betimes. She’s a dear, true-hearted child, and she’s always making somebody happy.”

“Send your daughter to me to confess, to-morrow afternoon, without fail,” abruptly answered he.

“That I will,” said Margaret. “I’ll see that she comes.”

And without more ado, Father Buhler departed.

When Lizzie came home, she was distressed to hear that her mother had promised that she should go to the confessional.

“Oh, mother dear, why did n't you put him off?” cried she. “None of the girls of my class go, and it will be as much as my reputation is worth. Since there has been so many lectures and books showing the actions of bad priests, how can a young lady with any self-respect go to confessional? I've half a mind not to stir a step.”

“Oh, Lizzie darling, the Father has been very good, and allows you to attend the high school, although it is against the Pope's regulation, so I would swallow my scruples and go this once.”

“Well, mother dear, as it is pleasing to you, I will yield this once, but I'd rather go to the stake, I really had.”

“Father Buhler has been very kind and forbearing,” said the fond mother. “But your father had to pay him a great sum to get leave..”

“Did he?”

“Of course, darling; that is the way of the church.”

“Well, then, after this once, I will keep away. I doubt if I ever go again.”

The afternoon came and Lizzie was at the confessional.

Father Buhler was secretly rejoiced, although his face wore a very sanctimonious look, as he took his seat in the confessional box and put on his stole.

After introductory questions, which he saw he

must cut short, or lose sight of his penitent, he said,—

“Have you any special sins to confess regarding your attending school?”

“I have none,” was the reply, “You remember my father settled the school matter.”

“Oh, ah,—I believe I did make such an arrangement. But leaving the school out of the question, you have grievously sinned in staying away from the confessional so long; what have you to say to that?”

“I have had my time taken up with my studies.”

“Not reason sufficient. Do you stately pray to the Virgin Mary, and all the saints?”

“I do not as much as formerly,” was the guarded reply.

“So I thought. Those public schools are death to our religious duties. It will be necessary for me to impose a heavy penance on you for your remissness. You will now come into the vestry, that I may explain what I wish you to do.”

Lizzie hesitated; but finally concluded she would see what he had to say, and would then take leave.

No sooner had she stepped into the next room, than Father Buhler had an usher, who was waiting, take her in charge, saying,—

“I will explain directly.”

Her eyes flashed fire, and she tried to go back, but the two men bore her on through the long church passages, leading into Buhler's house, she struggling

and screaming, so that her cries were even heard by people in the street.

When in his apartments, Buhler put her in a room that he could barricade, and in which the window was well guarded.

“Lizzie,” said he severely, “You are contumacious. The sacrament of penance only can remove your great sin. It is your penalty to stay here till it is my pleasure to release you,” adding in the same stern tones, “and the better you behave, the sooner you will have your liberty.”

Lizzie’s face was aflame with distress and anger, as she glared at him ; but he was content, since he had her in his power. The rare independence of her father, in saying that his daughter should graduate, determined him to take measures to prevent it. She regarded him with a withering look of scorn, too enraged to speak, and he judged it best to leave her to herself, to her inexpressible relief.

When meal time arrived, Sister Nabby, an old nun, brought in a glass of water and a slice of bread ; this was all she had for supper, and after a few kind words from the nun, was left to her meditations. When night came on, no light was given her, and she slept on the lounge without any covering, awoke with a chill, got up and walked the room for exercise, her mind revolving the strange plight she was in. What would her poor father and mother do ? She was quite sure they would come straight to Father

Buhler and insist that he knew where she was. Would he tell? Would he not conceal his knowledge of her imprisonment? If so, how could she be helped?

A loving school-mate had given her, as a birthday present, an illustrated text,—

“Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me.”

Lizzie thought it beautiful at the time, and so comforting to one in affliction, little dreaming that she would ever need to remember it for herself. In her extremity she did call on the name of the Lord, and felt a calm assurance that she was heard.

Buhler came in occasionally, to see if she was penitent, and if he could make her agree to give up her school, and be transferred to Madonna Hall.

“Lizzie,” said he, when he had tried several days to convince her of her sinfulness in going to a public school, and in omitting confession, “you are stiff-necked and rebellious, but I’ve concluded to give you a chance to finish your education at a celebrated seminary.”

“It’s better than here,” replied she, craftily, thinking, if once out of doors, she could find some way of escape.

“That’s like a sensible girl. You are no longer contumacious,” replied he, joyfully.

She smothered her feelings, and said, more pleasantly than she had yet spoken,—

“Can I really go to Madonna Hall?”

“Yes,” he replied, “the carriage of the Superioress is here, and you can go with her.”

“Very well,” said she, with dignity, as if conferring a favor; “but I must go first, and get my clothes, and say good-by to my father and mother.”

“I can not allow it,” was the reply. “The Superioress can not wait. You can go as you are, and be furnished with clothes when you get there.”

She put on the semblance of acquiescing, but her indomitable will was far from being broken, and she allowed Father Buhler to conduct her out of her prison, and present her to the Superioress, who received her very cordially.

“Are you ready to go with me?” she asked, with a genial smile.

“Yes, Madame, I am ready,” replied Lizzie, courteously.

This pleased the lady, who thought that she had secured a prize for the nunnery, and yet it came over her, what a pity for such a bright young creature to be shut in convent walls!

Lizzie was rosy and fresh looking, despite prison quarters and fare, and the weight of worry that was on her.

Father Buhler at once treated to cake and an abundance of tempting fruit.

The driver, Hosca Berlin, just then appearing with the carriage, was called in to partake of refreshments

at request of the Superioress ; and as they left, Father Buhler took Lizzie's hand, and told her that her penance was over,—he had forgiven her waywardness, and now she could start life anew and make a woman of mark, even a saint.

She bowed demurely, took her seat in the carriage with the Superioress, and was driven off. She had seen Hosea before ; he was a business acquaintance of her father. She knew that he was kind and might be glad to help her escape.

Father Buhler saw the carriage roll away with triumph in his eye. Once in Madonna Hall, she could not get free, and could be managed and subdued.

The Lady Clarissima, although ill at ease, was taking the young girl away as a matter of course. She was one whom her brother saw fit to put under discipline in the institution, and she did not then dare outwardly object to the plan. She was genial and affable to patrons and strangers, but tried to be severe, as in duty bound, towards the nuns, when occasion required, as was testified by her dignified manners and the ponderous keys she always bore about her person.

Lizzie, bright and sharp, set her wits at work how to get free before the carriage should reach the driveway of the dreaded nunnery. She became uneasy, got up and down in her seat as if possessed to get out of the carriage, and finally catching the satchel of the Superioress, which she had placed beside her, threw it out of the window.

The lady instantly had the carriage stopped, and bade her get out and bring the bag, as Hosea could not leave the horses.

Lizzie sprang out ; at which Hosea gave his steeds a touch of the whip, that made them wild, and away they sped at the top of their speed, leaving the fugitive free to go home.

The span on the run frightened Mother Clarissima almost out of her wits. She screamed, —

“Stop! stop! Hosea, stop the horses!” and getting frantic, threw up the front window of the carriage, and took hold of the driver to emphasize her words.

He turned with an appearance of agitation, put on of course. She could not hear his reply. He would help Lizzie get free at the expense of running the horses.

Mother Clarissima, who sank back in her seat in despair, commenced prayers to the Virgin and the most powerful of the saints, to help in her extremity. The idea of being killed by a runaway team was terrible. There was the possible lingering agony, with broken limbs, staved-in head, and crushed body, but, worst of all, afterwards the dreadful torments of purgatory. She called vividly to mind the teachings of the church on this doctrine, — how one must, at one time, be in the fiercest furnace fire, and then in the most intolerable arctic cold ; she had taught this, with illustrative engravings, so often, to classes of

nuns, and had so expiated on these horrors, that now they were as facts to her lively imagination. She seemed to hear the wailing of the lost, and was sure that she should soon join the despairing host.

What added poignancy to her distress, was the thought, that instead of investing her money, by asking the Bishop to buy off purgatorial pains, she had foolishly purchased the idolized horses that were to be the cause of her death.

“Oh, my lost opportunity!” thought she. “If ever safe again, I will attend to my true welfare at once. I will have large sums given to say masses for my soul’s repose.”

Poor thing! She held a view of after-death punishment like that which the heathen have held for long ages. Not the slightest advance from their priest-ridden, benighted superstition.

Hosea guided the horses to the turnpike that led away from the crowded streets.- He could thus avoid returning and overtaking Lizzie.

“Hosea!” cried the lady, close against the window, “stop! For the love of Heaven, stop the horses!”

“Do not fear,” he said. “I am master still, and they are cooling down.” Which she saw was true.

Finally, he drew rein before an old-fashioned inn, in a quiet town, miles away from any railroad.

Mother Clarissima was found to be in a hysterical state, and was carefully lifted out, a room assigned

her, and restoratives administered. She soon became more composed, and finally fell asleep. Meanwhile, the horses were groomed, and soothed with kind words, and when rested, suitably fed.

The Quaker landlord and his wife, being efficient allies of the Aid Society, gladly received refugees committed to their care. More than once had Hosea helped a homesick nun escape to this refuge.

The innkeeper and his wife were as hearty in their desire to aid poor women in escaping from the iron heel of Papacy as were the gracious and kindly "thee" and "thou" Samaritans of the anti-slavery times to help their colored neighbor on the wing from bondage to freedom.

It was a repetition of the old device of the underground railroad, in the days of the fugitive slave law, when whole-hearted Christians passed the flying ones from one refuge to another, showering kindness on them in the name of the Master.

The inn-keepers were lineal descendants of a noble line of Quakers, had charge of wardrobes, prepared by certain Christian ladies of the Dorcas type, so that a nun arriving there might be entertained, assume a disguise, and be transferred to her own home, if of Protestant parents, or to some family or institution where she could find suitable employment. The grand idea was to help the helpless, who were mourning over that life-mistake of choosing the vocation of a nun.

When will the government of this boasted land of liberty make investigation, and become aware of the fact that she has thousands of these unprotected women, who are crying to God for help beneath the flag of freedom?

Hosea, had been for some time a most useful helper in this work of mercy. He had all the qualities that make the successful business man, and a sincere desire to be God-approved. He had no faith in the Roman system, having been for years a reformed Catholic.

As he went to town to give his orders for the convent, it often happened that he had to wait the arrival of a train, or the goods ordered, were delayed. On one such occasion, years before, he found his way into the reading-room of the Young Men's Christian Association, where was abundant information on the great questions of the day.

One of the first books that he read was "Hislop's Two Babylons," showing the origin of idolatry to be in the ancient city of Babylon; that Nimrod and Semiramis were pioneers in starting it in the world, and that a remarkable similarity to the first appearance of the system has always characterized it, wherever found, no matter under what name. The book dealt with authentic facts, and was conclusive. Hosea was convinced; he had seen the system and some of its enormities, and had made it a study. The book was the key which unlocked its mysteries. His

public-school education had made him a true American and an independent thinker. His intellect was his own, and could not be bought, or intimidated by papal threats.

Buying a New Testament, he finished his business, and went back to Madonna Hall with his soul stirred to its depths. But where could he hide his treasure, and read it undisturbed? In a flash he thought of a place. As one of the horses was vicious, at times, and none dared to come near his stall but the one who fed and groomed him, Hosea decided to have his sanctum in the room beyond, which could only be reached by passing the fractious horse. This he fitted up to suit himself, and there the battle with superstition and error was fought, and there he found Christ an all-sufficient Redeemer and Advocate. He obeyed and became a man of faith and prayer.

Meanwhile he had his soul vexed with seeing so much of a system that was only a revamping of the old heathenism, with a thin varnishing of Christianity to deceive the unwary. He felt it duty to remain at his post, not only for the sake of aiding nuns who wished to be free, but also as a missionary incognito, to scatter light in the institution, that the deep darkness of idolatry might be lessened. He kept on hand a supply of New Testaments and managed to distribute them after each reception. The Protestant company had the credit of the work they would gladly have done. They were found, often treasured,

and proved the means of bringing some sorrowful souls to Christ, the Life-giver. Hence, one after another, the cloister inmates would attempt to get away, and Hosea and the carriage would be dispatched for them.

When sent in pursuit he invariably returned without the flying nun. He could not conscientiously remand to bondage.

As soon as the Superioress was sufficiently recovered, Hosea dutifully took her to her castle. He had accomplished his mission ; had obtained a disguise for a nun, which he feared would soon be needed, for the music teacher, Estelle, who from reading a Testament had become a Christian, and dared avow it.

XII.

An Experiment.

ONE day Florence went to meet Grace as she was returning to Mrs. Byington's, from her usual visit to the Aid Rooms. As they were conversing by the way, Florence abruptly said,—

“I can not make out why you are still dissatisfied with Count Stilling.”

“Indeed!” exclaimed Grace, coloring. Her own heart was full of enthusiasm at the successful work that day accomplished at the Rooms, in the rescue and safe forwarding of a young nun who longed for home, and it struck her as surprising that Florence felt no interest in this great movement, and was at leisure to speculate on her private affairs.

“I would not be so undecided!” pursued Florence.

“There is an old saying, ‘Decide in haste, and repent at leisure.’ Would you run that risk?” replied Grace, good-naturedly.

“You are too cautious,” returned Florence. “I intend to take a certain somebody by storm, other-

wise, I would bring you to terms as it regards the Count."

"How would you do it?" asked Grace, smilingly.

"I should make myself very fascinating, and cut you out."

Grace laughed at her friend's vain audacity.

"You think that I could not do it," said Florence, a little piqued, "but why should he not fancy me, as well as you? If you have more beauty, I have more society airs; while you have cultivated your mind, I have studied style of manners. This impertinence is a specimen, you think, but really, now, if you are fine-looking, you are so occupied with your schemes for helping those in trouble, that you are in your own way, and do little execution in the line of getting admirers, compared with what you might. What would you say, if I ensnared the Count into caring more for me than he does for you?"

"It would not be very noble on your part, if he were genuine and worth having," was the reply. "But now, as far as he is concerned, I should not be disturbed. He is the algebraic unknown quantity to me, and is likely to be."

"You do not use the tact usual with society ladies in encouraging him to make advances," said Florence.

"I design to keep him at a distance, until I am perfectly sure who and what he is," returned Grace.

"I remember my wise mother's words, 'Be chary of strangers, especially of foreigners who may be only adventurers.' That reminds me of something that came to light to-day, showing how ill-omened birds of prey flock to this country as if it were common spoil. A faction of Romanists clammering for the dominion, are busy fabricating history to prove that we are indebted to them for our independence and progress, when the record of that power always has been that of suppressing discoveries in science, and desolating every priest-ridden land she ruled."

"There is such a thing as being too careful, and never getting ahead in the world," replied Florence, busy in the line of her thoughts, and not attending to what Grace said. "Nothing venture nothing have ; is my motto."

"It is well to remember that haste makes waste," said Grace. "I believe in using common sense, and committing our ways to the Lord ; in having everyday duties to do, in living for a purpose, and if called to it, to 'adopt a righteous, unpopular cause,' as the Whittier advises, and in no wise managing in heart affairs."

"Of course you do," was the nettled reply. "Well, I shall still plan and manage, and you will not. We shall see which makes the best success."

"Agreed," replied Grace, "but you will not leave the Heavenly Guide out of the account, will you?"

“Why, yes, I suppose so, for I never saw His hand in my affairs. How can I reckon on what I know nothing about?”

“O Florence! it is very sad to ignore a loving Father, when you would be so happy and useful if at peace with Him. I took the step of yielding all to Him long ago, and am delightfully at rest.”

Florence was silent, industriously biting her finger nails,—a habit she had when mentally debating a question. At length she said,—

“You have not as much love of admiration as most young ladies.”

“Seriously, Florence,” replied Grace, “I do not think it desirable for a young lady to be either beautiful or rich, and have doubtful flatterers, as is often the case. An unworthy man may be eager to bear off a prize of beauty or wealth, and poor girls are more to be envied than the rich, for whatever are their trials, they are not obliged to listen to nonsense, and be put to their wits’ end to know what a man means by complimentary speeches and persistent attentions.”

“Well, upon my word, Grace, you are critical and sharp. You puzzle me more than ever. I wonder if you have any real regard for that man.”

“I find that my regard is mainly tempered with doubt,” replied Grace. Then to herself,—“I should distinctly give him the go by, were he not on such intimate terms with my honored father.”

“With doubt! Is that so?” returned Florence. “Well, I suppose everybody has misgivings. I have myself; and I’ll frankly tell you, Grace, that I am smitten with Mr. Cameron. You’ll think that amounts to little, I have so many fancies, but he is the most princely man I have ever met. What do you suppose makes him keep away so much?”

“His heart is in his chosen life work, and he has little time for ladies’ society,” replied Grace. “I even heard that he had decided not to marry.”

This was what he told her, when three years before she had declined his proposal of marriage.

“Oh, that must be a mistake!” cried Florence. “I am sure he cares for me, and if he does not make his appearance soon, I shall teach him a lesson.”

“What an idea?” exclaimed Grace. “I think it is time wasted to manoeuvre in such cases.”

“There’s where you are wrong,” rejoined Florence. “Now I am already for my blue silk. Would n’t you wear the blue?” The young ladies having previously reached the house, were getting ready for dinner.

“Yes, the blue, by all means,” replied Grace, “and I will wear white, and there will be no annoying contrast between us.”

The young ladies had finished their toilet, and were preparing to descend to the parlor, when Bridget knocked at the door, and handed in Paul’s note to Grace. As she read it, she flushed down to her neck, and sinking into a chair, exclaimed, —

“What nonsense! Who could have written this?”

“Sure enough,” said Florence, as she glanced it over. “Somebody is interested in your affairs; but I would not let it influence me in the least.”

“I shall show it to my father and mother, and start an investigation about this man’s record.”

“Oh, no,” replied Florence, “I would not do that. It would forever disaffect the Count, and you know he may be a saint after all. How romantic to receive an anonymous letter. I do so admire a sensation, and I really wish that I were in your shoes this minute!”

Grace could not help laughing at the way she went on, and said, looking at her watch,—

“Now, it lacks one-half hour to dinner, and we must go down to the parlor and entertain the guests until the bell rings.”

She resolved that she would see that the Count did not influence her, and learn more of his antecedents, before committing herself, or allowing him to make any advances. Indeed, she felt more than ever that she must not in the least trust him.

A part of our narrative from Florence’s point of view can be told from her letter to Rev. Mr. Cameron about this time.

BYINGTON MANSION, July 16.

DEAR MR. CAMERON,—

When I asked if I might write you, it was with little thought, but since you so kindly replied, “Certainly, if you wish,” I have decided to accept your

courteous permission. It seems long since you left. Do you know that I had fondly hoped that you would return, and take me to the Sacred Concert? Just now, however, I am quite taken with Grace Leavenworth's affairs, as my letter will show. Count Stillington dined here yesterday. He met Grace with a faultless mixture of deference and affection, and soon, as usual, led the conversation to himself. He is the most charming of egotists,—and his hearers were spell-bound, at the recital of his disinterested deeds and heroic exploits. What with his gift of speech and courtly presence, I think Grace will be moved to accept him. He is unmarried, as he never saw the right one until he met friend Grace, and now he will relinquish his post in foreign affairs, the flatteries of courts, and condescend to settle down in democratic America, to devote his life and fortune to making her happy. How romantic! Why are there not more stylish heroes from over the ocean! Not that I despise ministers, when they are noble like yourself, but it was not a handsome thing for you to leave me unattended at the dinner party, when everybody inquired for and missed you so much.

At the concert in the evening, I confess that I accepted the Count as my escort, Grace having an engagement at the Aid Society, of which she is president; of course I could not refuse him.

I shall run down home this week to attend to my plants, and if you will kindly call, I will be glad to give you further news.

Very truly,

FLORENCE FAIRFAX.

This specimen of Florence's ill-bred presumption reached Mr. Cameron while in his study preparing for the Sabbath. He was not a little surprised, and valued

it only for the news it bore respecting Grace, whom he still fondly loved, although he gave no sign. All he thought of Florence in her half-way advances was, "What a foolish girl!"

As it regarded Grace, he was a trifle jealous of the Count, and while he could not bring himself to believe that she would ever marry him, he had some fears of that possible calamity. He determined to seek an opportunity to reason with Grace about the risk of throwing herself away on a stranger. Oh, if he could only assure himself that she still had some tender regard for him!

Augustus Cameron was early thrown upon his own resources, and by persistent industry had worked his way through college, and the theological course. Very early in life he had an object in living. And the man who has the moral courage to have nothing to do with the many tempting things that beset him, but steadily seeks to accomplish the one worthy thing undertaken, is sure to succeed.

Young Cameron graduated with high honor, and whole-souled and eloquent as a preacher, soon drew crowds.

Florence, in common with other young ladies, was fascinated with the popular young preacher, who was the rising star, and fancied that she could more effectually interest him in her by one of the strangest of her odd freaks. She was for a few days at home in her native city, where he was preaching. She was

there to care for her plants, she said, but she had another care, her maid Josie thought, and she knew her young mistress well.

The morning after her arrival, having sent a characteristic note to Mr. Cameron, asking him to call, she repaired to the conservatory, which opened from the back parlor.

She had been for some time busily engaged, when the door bell rang, and Josie came to say that a gentleman was waiting in the parlor.

“Show him in here.”

Josie opened her eyes in astonishment, but knew her place too well to offer remark.

“Show him in, I say. What are you waiting for?”

Then as she left the room to do her bidding, Florence said to herself, in the height of her self-conceit and vanity,—

“He does n’t dream of my accomplishments, but I will enlighten him.”

She wore a dainty white wrapper, and her hair was elaborately curled. As Mr. Cameron came in, she looked up from a moss-rose bush, which she was smoking, to destroy the insects, removed the cigar from her mouth, and advanced to meet him, holding it carelessly in her fingers.

He was at first too surprised to speak, and took her hand, thinking she was bereft of reason.

“Miss Florence, I can not believe my senses,” he said, gravely.

With a forced laugh the young lady led him to a divan in the parlor, where she seated herself beside him, her eyes sparkling with a strange light.

“Do n't you believe, Mr. Cameron, that I have a good reason for smoking this cigarette?”

“I can not conceive of a good reason for so disgusting a thing,” he replied, his strong aversion to the vile weed asserting itself.

“I thought so,” exclaimed Florence, more soberly. “I might waive the subject, but I am frank. I did not hide my experiments, you see. And it is not so very bad taste either, for I am told that many fashionable New York ladies smoke cigarettes and are proud of it. Now, look here, please,” and she led him to a wilderness of choice plants filling the windows of the room.

“Just see my beauties,—this azalia, wonderful, is n't it? *Grandpere* paid fifty dollars for it. This fuchsia, too, — see, it is beginning to droop, and my darling roses have n't half the bloom and buds they ought to have.”

“Do you give them plenty of water?” asked Mr. Cameron.

“Yes, Josie attends to that. But do you see those little green insects?”

“Yes,” replied he; “they are the parasites that are injuring the life of the plant.”

“I know; that is the disease,” said Florence, “and this cigar is the remedy. Am I not right in smoking? Does not the end justify the means?”

“No, no, it does not, he replied. “Never do evil that good may come. It is a filthy habit, and if there were no other remedy, let the plants die, or hire some old smoker to do the job for you.”

“That would be shifting the responsibility, I see,” said Florence, quickly. “But who could I get? There’s the Count. Shall I ask him to come down weekly, and smoke my plants? I could give it up, then.”

“Far better do so than to smoke yourself,” he replied. “The things that are lovely and of good report should engage a young lady.”

These words greatly surprised Florence, who looked to see him consumed with jealousy, when she mentioned Stilling.

Mr. Cameron rose to go, pleading an engagement, and Florence saw what a sad mistake she had made, and that she had only disgusted him; and hastened to say, quite humbly, by way of apology,—

“I could never have succeeded with my darling plants without it, and I chose one of two evils: having plants with smoking, rather than do without them.”

“Do without them, by all means, Miss Florence,” he replied. “I would feast my eyes on the beautiful out of doors rather than perform such pernicious service for the plants. It is not safe to meddle with

tobacco. It is sometimes flavored with opium, physicians tell us, and the wrapper on the cigarette is whitened with arsenic, and there may be a trio of poisons, ready to work deadly mischief. You will find that green-house men recommend sprinkling plants with an infusion of hellebore, which is a sufficient remedy for insects."

"Is it? I will gladly try it," replied Florence, more abashed than she had ever been in her life. "You remind me so much of Grace."

"Thank you. I admire her more than any woman living," was the hearty reply, as with a polite bow he took leave.

When Florence came to look at what she had done with the eyes of another, she was thoroughly ashamed. The necessity of smoking was a pretence, as the green-house man in the vicinity would gladly take charge of the plants.

On her return to Byington Mansion, she met Grace in the conservatory.

"I've disgraced myself forever," she said, as she briefly made confession, purposely omitting Mr. Cameron's expression of regard for Grace, adding, "I am resolved that it shall be the last of the cigar business."

"I hope so," replied Grace. "I could not be more surprised if you had told me that you had set fire to the house to destroy the insects."

"I might as well have done it, I know," said the

other as she pulled a rose to pieces. "I wish I could undo it. Is n't it horrid that the foolish things we do can never be undone?"

"Yes, can never be undone," echoed Grace. "It is very sad; but as you are cured of all desire to repeat the freak, I'd think of something else. Did you hear Mr. Cameron preach?"

"Oh, dear, yes, and that is what set me to thinking, so that I am almost killed. He is perfectly splendid. I've made up my mind, however, not to marry him."

"Have you?" was the composed reply. "Where did you hear him preach, and what was his subject?"

"I heard him last Sabbath, at College Street Church. Mr. Greig is away on his vacation, and Mr. Cameron supplied his pulpit. I really never listened to a sermon before. I have always been thinking of my own dress, or searching for artistic effects in the dress of others. In church and out of the church, dress has been my idol. I am a saint in that line, and it is time I changed. I wish you would help me keep my resolve to do better."

"We'll join hands and help each other," replied Grace with a bright smile. "But you have not told me about that wonderful sermon."

"I am coming to it," was the reply. "It was about 'Moral Balances,' from the passage, 'Thou art weighed and art found wanting,' with what Paul says,

‘to every man not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think.’ He said that individuals and systems of religion were being weighed and measured, and should see to it that they did not overestimate their goodness. That was strange to me. These scales that Mr. Cameron produced brought down my castle of pride. For, honestly, I never denied myself for others; I always served self first, and I ought now to be humble.”

“I wish I had heard the sermon,” said Grace, greatly interested. “Tell me more about it, please.”

“Oh, don’t ask me that,” exclaimed Florence. “I can only remember a few thoughts. He said that some, in weighing themselves, selected their best deeds, and put them into the scales, as if they were a specimen of their entire character. I thought of the Catholic Church, and myself also. My good deeds, and the good deeds of that church are like toppers in a strawberry box, in sight. But in order to have a just estimate of character, he said the faults and sins must go into the account, as well as the virtues and worthy deeds.”

“That surely was a wonderful discourse, and it found a heart ready to receive it,” gently said Grace.

“I have been obliged to think,” was the reply. “My schoolmate and neighbor, Anna Morton, died when I was at home? She was so gay, — and I cannot help asking what if it had been me?”

“You are right,” said Grace; “you are dealing with

yourself honestly. And you know that there is One who can supply all your lack, and all the fitness He requires is to feel your need of Him, and accept of Him."

"Yes; but how can I do it while I lack the disposition? My will is in the way; I can not consent to what I know I ought to do. I have a settled aversion to that way. I cannot command my feelings."

"Well, then, let your feelings go," cried Grace. "Step along in the path of obedience without them, and do what you know is duty, and God will bless you, and take care of your feelings. They will come around all right, if you listen to God's Word, sent home by His Spirit," continued Grace tenderly. "You will seek eternal life through Christ."

"How did you learn all these things?" asked Florence evasively.

"I have always studied the Bible more or less, whether at home or in school, and have been, from a child, under the wing of religious influences. The blessedness of life is to love to do what the Lord requires of us. All is peace and harmony then. The enterprise in which I am engaged is a helpful school to me, I meet so many sorrowful hearts that need sympathy and kindness."

"I shall never trifle with Mr. Cameron again," interrupted Florence. "I would not blame him if he never spoke to me again. If you see him, please tell

him that I am a true penitent. You think I am, don't you?"

"Yes, dear, I think you are improving," replied Grace, encouragingly, although she saw that Florence was more concerned in regard to what Mr. Cameron thought of her than in making her peace with God. She hoped for the best, that the good seed sown would yet spring up and bear fruit.

"What a pity she was started wrong," Grace said to herself.

With all Florence's admissions and contrition, the substratum of her selfishness was still intact. Conviction is not conversion. To know that one ought to turn and the turning, are two very different things. She admitted that the rebukes of Mr. Cameron's searching sermon were just; that she was weighed in the balances and found wanting, — but her contrite spasm was soon over, showing that without good training, a symmetrical character is impossible. "Just as the twig is bent, the tree's inclined."

XIII.

Effect of the Kidnapping.

MEANWHILE there was great distress in the cottage of Patrick O'Connor. The idolized child, the joy and brightness of the household, was still missing.

Mr. O'Connor was a matter-of-fact man, and his first question was, when, the next day after she left, they found she did not go home with a schoolmate, "Where did she go, Margaret?"

"She started for the confessional," replied his wife mournfully, "Poor darlin'! I had hard work to persuade her to go," and the fond mother broke down, crying. "She did n't want to confess, and I mistrust that she is this minute doin' of some penance on the cold marble floor of the chapel."

"Went to the confessional, did she?" exclaimed Patrick, with his heart swelling. "If so, Father Buhler can tell us where she is."

But that dignitary chose to be invisible; and Margaret passed a sleepless night, crying as if her heart

would break, while her husband was stirring up the city police to no effect, and after midnight, coming home, walked the floor, anathematized the priest, and made bitter speeches, wringing his hands in the agony of suspense.

In the morning he called at the church, and found Buhler preparing to celebrate mass.

"Good morning, Father," said he. "I called to ask what you have done with our Lizzie?"

"What I've done with your Lizzie!" Buhler bluffly replied, in well-assumed astonishment.

"Yes," said Patrick, sturdily. "I understand she came here to confess, day before yesterday afternoon, and no one has seen her since."

"That is a mistake," stolidly replied the priest. "She has not been here, and has not confessed to me for two years. Did she plan to confess?"

"Yes; and Margaret says she came here."

"Well, then, she doubtless sought out some other father. There are a number of the clergy at the Cathedral. Most likely she went there. Young lady penitents admire to confess to young priests."

That was all the satisfaction Mr. O'Connor could get from the wily Jesuit, whose religion allowed him to resort to lying and ignore facts wherever it suited his convenience.

Patrick went home and told his wife, and another day of sorrow and agony passed in the O'Connor household, the father and all his friends diligently

searching and making inquiries in every direction. He advised with the chief of police ; he set detectives at work, but no one of them thought it best to arrest Buhler, and hence discovered nothing.

When Lizzie suddenly appeared on the scene, both parents cried over her for joy.

“The Lord be praised!” was all they could say.

When she told them how she had been taken into Father Buhler’s house to do penance, kept there, and finally ordered to Madonna Hall, they were too overwhelmed with surprise and anger to utter a word.

“If this is the game he plays,” outspoke Patrick at length, “I’ll report him to the bishop.”

“It is the most wicked thing I ever heard of,” cried Margaret angrily.

“He’s the thief of the world!” added Patrick. “Stealing of goods is bad enough, but when it comes to stealing our child, I say, ‘Hold off.’”

“I’m sick of such a religion!” exclaimed Lizzie. “It is dishonest to the core and I believe that the Bible the priests forbid so much is of God, and was given for us to read and learn His will. Do you know, Sister Nabby, the old nun at Father Buhler’s, has a few leaves of the Bible left, of the one he tore in pieces, which she has managed to keep and hide away in her room.”

“She has!” exclaimed the mother, with upraised hands.

“ Yes ; and mother dear, when I cried like my heart was breaking, and Father Buhler was off at the confessional, she very carefully brought one leaf — it was more precious to her than gold, — and on it was the thirty-fourth Psalm ; she read it to me, and, mother dear, you can't think what a comfort it was.”

“ The blessed nun ! ” said Margaret.

“ Yes ; the Lord sent her with His Word, to calm my mind,” added Lizzie. “ I was almost crazy. She read the beautiful verse, ‘ The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them. ’ That was a strong tower into which I fled for safety. I know that I do fear God, and so, of course, His angel made his camp all around me.

“ Why, you blessed child, I believe he did, or you would not be here ! ” exclaimed Margaret, clasping Lizzie to her heart.

“ I believe that myself ! ” echoed Patrick. “ If the Lord from Heaven had not helped you, we should not see you here to-day.”

“ I know that is so,” replied the daughter. “ And those Bible verses are so comforting when one is in trouble ! Oh, how I wish every poor homesick nun could have them to read ! It is so cruel to shut them away from the light and comfort there is for them. Sister Nabby is a patient soul, and full of the love of God ; she has been so blessed in reading those few pages ! She talked lovely. She said the Lord cared for all His creatures, dark as the ways seemed some-

times. Not a sparrow falls without His notice. He numbers the very hairs of our heads. He bore all our sicknesses and sorrows, and by and by, in a little while, He will appear to deliver us."

"You don't say!" exclaimed Margaret, in bewilderment.

"I should n't wonder!" cried Mr. O'Connor. "It's likely He'll appear when such high wicked doings are carried on. It's my business to go to the chief of police, and have him look into the matter. And if I don't get relief that way, I shall appeal to Bishop Berlin, and through him, to the Pope. I'll see if my child can be smuggled off, when she goes to confessional. By the way, Lizzie, don't venture there again. It is n't safe."

"I would n't dare go there again, father dear," was her calm reply."

In the absence of the bishop, Buhler always put on airs, and tried to take the helm of management at Madonna Hall. He called on Lady Clarissima some days later, and at once commenced in a critical tone,—

"Seems to me you made a great miscarriage, instead of getting the girl Lizzie safely in convent quarters."

"Yes, brother,—let me explain. The horses became unmanageable, and ran away, and that child somehow got out in the *melee*, and, as Hosea could not stop the mad steeds, we lost sight of her."

"Of course," replied Father Buhler. "It was very badly managed. The girl went home and exposed me. I would not have had it happen for thousands of dollars. My reputation is impeached, and were I not pastor of a powerful church, I should be sent to state-prison if this offence were proved."

"Is it possible?" exclaimed Mother Clarissima, vigorously fanning herself.

"It is possible, and more than probable," replied he, crossly. "If things continue to retrograde at the present rate, there is no telling what will happen to the best of us. The father of the girl Lizzie," Buhler went on, "has threatened to bring my case into court, but lacks witnesses to prove his point, which is, that I kidnapped his daughter. She asserts it, and my attorney will take the ground that she is not sane, and will bring witnesses to prove that she was wandering the streets, and frequenting saloons, during the days she says she was shut up in my house."

"What! take refuge in lies?" exclaimed Mother Clarissima.

"It destroys her testimony, you see," said Father Buhler. "If there is the least proof that she is insane, her word is of no account. I threatened to do this to intimidate her father, and have him take his case out of court, which no doubt he will."

"You can be prosecuted for libel!" cried the Superioress, greatly shocked. "It is a dreadful thing to spoil the girl's character."

“No doubt I could gain my case,” was the reply, ignoring her last sentence. “But the ill odor of a law-suit of the kind, when the doings of the church, past and present, are so much criticised, would do me much harm. As it is, I must confess that I continue to lose members of my flock. First I know, they slink off and become Reformed Catholics. This threatened suit, if not headed off, would work badly for me in this direction.”

“I am sure it would,” said Mother Clarissima.

“Yes,” rejoined Buhler, “and I guard them every possible way. And whenever I have my confidential talks, I impress it on them that the sects hate a turn-coat. ‘If you want to be employed by Protestants,’ I say to them, ‘and want to be sure and keep in their good graces, stick closely to your religion; they wil honor and respect you for it.’ Yet they sometimes leave for all that. And I see, Clarissima, that you lose a nun every now and then.”

“Yes, I do,” replied she, demurely, “indeed, quite often. What possesses them to be so discontented? and how do they manage to escape? Now I take every pains to guard my citadel. I have a lodge, overlooking the park gate, and the head gardener, or one of his men, sleeps there every night as a watchman.”

“Yes, yes,” returned Father Buhler, “sleeps. But a true watchman never sleeps! I think that’s the mischief. The gardener is a hard-working man, and

needs his sleep. I'll warrant I could get through the gates with an army and he 'd be none the wiser."

"What can I do?" asked the Superioress.

"I would advise to have Hosea in charge. He is bright, sharp and alert. I do not think there could be much escaping under his eye."

"Neither do I; I like your suggestion. I shall see it put in force. I think Hosea would make a good watchman. When he is not otherwise engaged, I will put the lodge in his care."

This settled, Buhler was pacified and took his leave.

XIV.

Sister Clarissima and the Bishop.

ONE evening at the pupils' reception at Madonna Hall, the Superioress, giving Bishop Berlin his favorite arm-chair, seated herself beside him, as she wished to confer with him on a matter of great moment.

The object of the gathering was to encourage the music scholars; some thirty of whom, one after another, made their progress known on the piano, while the assembled convent and invited friends listened. Some had talent, and it was pleasant to hear the sprightly rendering of their lessons, but for the most part the exercises were hum-drum and monotonous. There were several of the clerical managers present. Fathers Krafts, Williams, Pecci, the Pope's nephew, and Buhler, who were seated among the audience. Late in the evening the aged Irish Archbishop Bland arrived.

Bishop Berlin soon turned to the lady by his side, with a rare smile, saying,—

“Well, Little Mother, how do you and the span prosper?”

“I am getting well and strong, my lord, and am not inclined to quit going to drive, even if the horses behaved badly, on one occasion.

“I am afraid that you will commit suicide that way yet,” said he, more gravely. “The idea of your choosing the span that Colonel Southbury had his match to handle, when he is a prince of horsemen! I thought by this time that you would be glad to sell them, since they served you such a trick. But it seems you like them still.”

“Indeed, I do,” she replied, “just as well as ever.”

“I admire fine horses, myself,” he rejoined, “but they must be safe, and I would not risk my neck behind those capricious bays, and I dread to have you.”

“It is said to be the finest turnout in the county,” said the lady.

“That may be,” was the reply. “But I am surprised that Hosea should let them get the better of him.”

“It happened in this way,” replied the lady, bent on clearing him from blame. “You see, the horses had on common bits, and the firmer he held the reins, the faster they ran. He uses curbed bits now, and says there is no danger.”

“You must have had a fearful fright,” said the Bishop.

"I had indeed," was her answer. "I thought my time to die had come, and, my lord, I would have given worlds just then to have seen you, and have one thing settled."

"Ah, Little Mother, what could it be?" he asked with great concern.

"I am afraid some of the company will hear," she replied, in a low voice, partly shielding her face with her fan as she spoke.

"Take my arm and I will lead you out on the piazza," he said.

They found a seat on the other side of the building, where the ding-dong of the piano could not be heard. There was a trellis laden with a fragrant honey-suckle; climbing roses were flaunting near by, and the notes of the whip-poor-will came from the orchard. Here the Superioress felt that she could freely talk with one whom she had just discovered was her dearest friend.

Madonna Hall in the moonlight was enchanting. The subdued rays shimmering through the tree-tops, glistening in the spray of the fountains, coying with flowers, peering into shrine, grotto, and arbor, making the well-trimmed greensward very beautiful, partly in shade, and partly in light; the scene was like a poet's dream of paradise.

The bishop had an eye for beauty, and seemed to see it all, while Mother Clarissima, although a lover of nature, was too much taken up with her thoughts to notice her surroundings.

“My child, what was it that you wished settled?” he asked, very tenderly.

“You remember, Father, what I asked when my property came into your possession, that all that I needed should pass through my hands.”

“Yes, Little Mother, I did agree to that,” and he took her hand, and smoothed her hair in a fatherly way. “What shall I get for you?”

“Oh, nothing,” she replied. “But when I thought I should be killed, I had some hard thoughts about you.”

“About me? What have I done to cause them?” he asked, greatly puzzled.

“It’s what you have n’t done!” she replied, in a perverse way.

“You speak riddles, Sister Clarissima. What duty toward you have I neglected?”

“I do not blame you, my lord, any more than I blame myself, but I think that we both have been very negligent. You know that I came out from the world, and turned from its vanities. I, an heiress, did this, and agreed that my property, when it fell to me, should be freely given to the church, and you were to be the administrator.”

“I remember that, dear child,” said he, indulgently. “I persuaded you to take the step, and I thought in your youth and beauty you made a most acceptable sacrifice. At the time I wrote a letter to the Pope, and he sent you his approbation and blessing.”

“Yes, Father, I know, and that is all very well; but I was just heart-broken when I came so near being killed, and I thought I was going straight to Purgatory. Oh, how I wished that I had devoted a part of my estate to pay for masses for the repose of my soul.”

“But you were n’t dead,” was his reply, “and your soul was n’t in burnings. Would you pay money before it is due?”

“Why not, if it is sure to be demanded?” she asked. “Why not, when money is plenty, have masses said in advance, to save me from suffering when I get there, if go I must?”

“The church does not forbid it,” he said, unquietly, wishing she would cease her questions until his mind was settled. He was investigating the matter, was shaken in his belief, and the absurdity of the doctrine began to appear, and yet he could not fully expose it.

“Oh, I’m so glad; then it must be done,” she cried. “If money paid for masses will do the cleansing just as well, why is n’t money the greatest savior of them all?—I mean more than Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and all the rest to whom we pray?”

The Bishop was startled, but could not repress a smile, as he said,—

“Oh, you naughty Clarissima! you must stop reasoning, or I can not tell where you will end.”

“We’ve got to go there, truly, every one of us?” she asked, persistently.

“The church so affirms, and the church is supposed to know,” was the cautious reply.

“I do n’t like the doctrine one bit,” she said, bitterly.

“We must, I suppose, make the best of it,” he replied. “The church teaches that money paid for masses greatly shortens the intensity and time of suffering.”

“Then the rich are relieved, and do not have to stay as long as the poor?”

“Yes,” replied his lordship, hesitatingly, “if there is no provision made for the poor; but the church is supposed to be very thoughtful for her paupers.”

“If I were poor, I’m very sure she would forget me,” replied the lady, decidedly. “I’m right glad that I am rich, my lord, for, if you will manage this matter wisely, I possibly may escape the suffering I dread so much,” and she nervously shivered with fear.

“I will gladly do all in my power.”

“A thousand thanks!” cried the impetuous lady, “and now if I commence to have masses said, cannot I intercept this mandate of torture, and be free?”

“I will do the best I can for you, Little Mother, but the church consigns us to go there the moment we die.”

“Well, I do n’t intend to,” replied she, with her old-time spirit, “if it takes every cent of my money to keep me out.”

“Not so fast, little one,” pettingly said his highness, again caressing her beautiful curly hair, for a strange infatuation had come over him, and he, for a moment, seemed to lose his dignity, but regaining it, said, as if to turn the subject,—

“The church holds your money. What are you going to do about it?”

“That is to say, you do, my lord,” replied she archly, “for I have been in the church long enough to know that you do just what you choose with such funds, and this large property is subject to my orders, as you told me.”

“I dare say I did, for you are so charmingly reasonable that I can trust you,” said he, fondly.

“Thanks. I’ll try to be worthy of your confidence,” she rejoined. “I must, however, have my way about this, and I hope that it will be your mind, too.”

“Very likely,” replied he, in an amused way.

“You know, Father, that you promised me eternal felicity, if I would give myself to the church, and now you tell me, after all my self-denying life, I must go to torment. No, your reverence, I take back my vows, my money as well, and turn away from a church that is so faithless to its promises! Protestants, I am told, do not have a purgatory in their system, and if this matter cannot be made straight, I will turn heretic. I really will!”

“Hush, hush!” my child,” said the bishop, soothingly, “I fear you will be crazy?”

“I believe the prospect of that place of pain does make me just wild, for go there I will not!” she cried vehemently.

“I will see what can be done,” said he, gently. “I am hopeful that there is a way to arrange to have you escape. I think I shall have good news for you. I will study on the subject, and tell you later.”

“But, Father dear, that is so uncertain. I must now have a business statement. You are my confessor, and know just how sinful I am, and also know on what basis this after-death penance is calculated. What is the amount of my sin, and what is to pay if I die this moment?”

The bishop was quivering with the thought of the absurdities of this dogma of the church, which was adopted from heathenism only as late as 1438.

“Let’s see,” was the outwardly calm reply, “you have had the Sacrament of Baptism, and the church teaches that cleanses from all original sin, so you’ve only your own sins to answer for.”

“Yes, Father, and every time I confess, if you absolve me, my sins are all blotted out. Now, if I confess when dying, and you forgive me my sins then, how happens it that I must go into a furnace of fire to be cleansed?”

The bishop was greatly embarrassed by this strong way of putting the case, but made reply,—

“I remind you, my child, that you must rely solely on the judgment of the church in this matter,”

“Yes, my lord, I do,” she replied; “but I am a business woman, — as Superioress, I am so of necessity, — and business is business, and what I want is the account of my sins, and what it will cost to be cleansed from them. If you do truly absolve me, I do not see as they can possibly reach a large amount.”

“I think you are a very darling child,” murmured he, under his breath, with glistening eyes. “You are a most queenly woman, and very few are as innocent; but in confessing, one is apt to forget some important sins. It is this fact that makes the church think post-mortem fires so necessary to fit the soul for heaven.”

“Oh, dear me! I’m just distracted!” she exclaimed. “Can not you possibly think of any way by which I can be reprieved? Can I not give money to priests to say masses in advance, and have this account strictly kept? The least carelessness of the priests would work woful mischief. And so many of them are incompetent from taking too much wine. How can I trust the interests of my soul with them? They may take money to say five hundred masses, and possibly forget and not say fifty. Who is to keep this record right?”

“Be calm, my child, be calm.

“What is the rule in this case? How is sin computed, and how much money is needed for a certain amount of guilt?”

“Those are hard questions, easier asked than answered,” he replied.

“Is it best to pay before the work is done?” again queried this woman of affairs. “We do not in other cases; however, I wish it done for me. I want Father Buhler and Father Williams to say, each, five hundred masses for my soul, and have witnesses by, to count and know that the full number are said. When the work is done, they shall be paid the five or ten dollars each mass, as they see fit to charge.”

“You are quite a little manager,” was the reply; “it shall be done.”

“Will this number be sure to keep my soul from what I so much dread?”

“I hope they will,” replied he, while in a sea of doubt himself.

“See here, my lord, what I found in the *City News*,” and moving into the moonlight, she read a cutting from that paper,—

“One of the Australian courts is called upon to decide a novel and difficult question. A Roman Catholic merchant left in his will a bequest of \$7,000 to be used to deliver his soul from purgatory. The executor demands legal proof from the local priests that the conditions of the will have been complied with before he will pay over the money.

“Now, my lord, can you not tell me—you should know precisely—when I have paid enough.”

“I will look up the matter,” he replied, annoyed

beyond measure by her persistency. "I must acknowledge that there is great looseness here."

He then added, "You must beware lest you question too much. The church considers it sinful, and it calls for penance in this world, as well as in the next."

"I know it, Father; but I crave pardon in this thing. There should be a system of debt and credit about the matter; an account book and ledger should be kept, and when money is paid in, like this of mine, it should be credited, and there should be no mistake. Else, how can you know when one has paid a sum sufficient to be released from suffering? Tell me, my lord, do you certainly know when any soul is cleansed by fire, and rises to heaven?"

"This is a mooted question, and I am not wise enough to know," was the dignified reply, by which he hoped to waive the subject till he could fully examine its record.

"But, pardon me," rejoined the lady, "it must be a mistake to keep this, that concerns the soul, mysteriously in the dark. When money is given, some one should be empowered to return a receipt for what is paid, for a certain amount of guilt, or the door is open to untold swindling. Even if the church is the richest firm in the world, she seems to have a most unaccountably loose way of conducting affairs. Really, now, does any one but God know when a soul is ready for heaven?"

“My own opinion is, none but God knows,” replied the bishop, candidly. “But this will lead to heresy.”

“No, my lord, business is n’t heresy. I must have this question settled right, and will you not help me?”

“Assuredly,” was the genial rejoinder. “I will look over the old records of when this became a part of the church system, in connection with holy scripture, and, if you still insist, I will set those two priests saying the number of masses you mention, and have a reliable person on hand to keep the record. In case you may not need so many as you name, what shall be done with the remainder?” asked he, absently, as if thinking of something else.

“Pass it to your own account,” replied she, radiant with hope that money could be made to serve her so well in the next world,—“if, indeed, you need it. According to the best authorities, you can not sin. You surely do not expect to go to that dreadful place?” said she, in a sweet, coaxing way.

“I am in doubt. I must go as a sinner, unless forgiven. You are far more of a saint than I am, my child,” he said, tenderly.

“Oh, no, indeed, you are wrong there,” was her reply. “But this praying and paying ahead is in the line of an indulgence, is it not?”

“It may be so considered. What put that thought into your mind?” he asked, with a puzzled smile.

“Oddly enough, I was thinking of the two-hundred-thousand-dollar indulgence the Pope has lately given Prince Amando, the Duke of Aosta, to marry his niece,” replied the lady, blushing.

The bishop was glad of the turn the conversation had taken, and to be relieved of the close questioning of the persevering little lady. Truth to tell, his faith was terribly shaken in most of the dogmas of Rome, as he studied the Word of God, and he preferred not to talk about a doctrine regarding which he had so many misgivings.

XV.

Sister Clarissima and the Tombs.

AH, how came you by that item of news?" asked Bishop Berlin, not a little surprised, as Mother Clarissima spoke of Prince Amandeo, and the indulgence given him to marry his niece.

"I read it in the church paper you so kindly lent me," replied she, blushing.

The Bishop's face was alight with well-pleased interest.

"What did you say in your heart, Little Mother?"

The lady felt that turning her heart inside out for the bishop to examine, now, when he was her ideal of one to be loved, and she did not wish him to know it, was especially trying, and she shrank from the rude ordeal. Why could he not be merciful, and let her pass? But he was too willing to ascertain just how her mind was affected towards himself, to be guilty of so grave an omission. As she paused irresolute, he repeated the question.

“What did you say in your heart, Little Mother?”

“Must I confess?” deprecatingly said she, with rosy cheeks and downcast eyes, which he thought immensely charming.

“Your heart must be open to me, Little Mother,” he replied, in kindest tones.

“Well, then,” rejoined she, desperately, “I thought if his holiness could grant canonical dispensation for that which is a crime, he would be better employed in giving leave for that which is according to nature, and no crime.”

“I thought so, too,” replied the bishop, seizing her hand, with moistened eyes. “God revealed this to you, Sister Clarissima. I have loved you long, and hopelessly,” and he drew nearer, and put his arm around her, and tearfully kissed her.

“Oh, Father, is this right?” she blushing demurred, drawing away from him.

“I beg pardon. I intend to see that it is right. Where God draws two souls together as one, it is wrong not to marry. Forbidding to marry is the great bane of the church. It is an innovation, and dates back, I find, only as far as the eleventh century. Now it shall be my life purpose to have the innovation set aside.”

“Is it possible to have it done?” asked the lady, her heart beating between hope and fear.

“It is. The Pope can revoke it if he chooses.

There are some countries where marriage of the clergy is allowed. It is tolerated among the Orientals. It should be everywhere; and one of the first reforms of the church, which has fallen into grave errors, shall be, God helping me, this mandate forbidding to marry. I shall at once secure the dispensation from the Pope in my own case; and then have a numerously-signed petition of American clergy, to present at the Vatican for consideration. It will be sure to be granted after a time, for we are doing more for Rome in this country than is being done in any other. The Pope can, and must, listen to us," continued the bishop. "We have, both of us, deserved well of the church, and there is no reason why we should not be united in holy bonds."

"I hope the powers there will listen to you," replied the lady, as she leaned her head restfully against his shoulder.

"I am sanguine that they will. I have great influence at Rome. Cardinal Alimonda owes me a debt of gratitude,—I plunged in and saved his life, when his boat upset in the Tiber, and he came near drowning. He will intercede for me. Shall I take a present to the Pope, Little Mother?"

"By all means," replied she, happy at the prospect of being united to the man she almost worshipped.

"I will leave you now, my darling Clarissima, as I have other pressing duties to attend to this evening. Early to-morrow, as soon as I can arrange with

Fathers Buhler and Williams, I shall take passage for Europe. With God's blessing, I shall succeed, my Testament shall be published, and we will have our wedding day the same month, September next, that is appointed for that of the Prince Amandeo, if you so elect, Little Mother."

She complied with an eloquent smile and blush, although she did not understand his allusion to publishing.

He hastened to explain, by saying: "I neglected to tell you, my darling Clarissima, that I have for some time been engaged in translating the New Testament into English, and I wish to get the Pope's approval."

"The Pope's approval!" exclaimed the lady. "How can he commend it, when he forbids the circulation of the Sacred Writings?"

"Let me tell you, my darling, that we live in an era of change. The Pope himself, at times, feels the quickening life of the forces around him. He gave Henri Laserre, the cultured French Catholic, leave to publish and circulate the New Testament, which he had translated into French. I hear that there have been many hundred thousand copies scattered in France, to the great delight of the translator and the readers, and the glory of God.

"I am surprised, my lord," exclaimed the lady. "When will wonders cease?"

"I regard it as one of the most remarkable events

of the period," was his reply. "It is true the Pope revoked his sanction of the work the next year, but Laserre is even now pleading his case at the Vatican. I have examined the New Testament to learn its teachings as interpreted by the fathers, in regard to the celibacy of the priesthood."

"Do you find any proof that the clergy must live single?" asked she.

"Not a particle. The Bible precept and example are all in the opposite direction. Paul expressly says that 'marriage is honorable in all.' I have the work of translating nearly done, and can finish it on ship-board, if diligent. I am in a state of transition myself; and as I translate from the Greek and the Syriac, I am filled with wonder that the church should have wandered so far from the early Christian simplicity."

"Indeed!" said the lady. "What is to be done?"

"There must be a return to the primitive faith and practice — and the very first step concerns the home and family, — which is to annul the edict forbidding to marry."

"I'm sure you're right, my lord; you always are!" exclaimed the lady, with enthusiasm.

The bishop then took affectionate leave, and the lady, radiant with hope, returned to the company, bringing a brightness into the room which seemed to electrify all present. She had a mobile face, that

was beautiful when she was happy, and plain when distorted with fretful regrets, or passion.

Now her happiness overpowered every other emotion, and still, to be consistent with herself and her faith, she ought to be angry with Sister Estelle, the music teacher, who was under the ban of the clergy, for apostatizing. She was in a tumult of conflicting feelings. Must she be stern with Sister Estelle? She remembered her own perverse sayings to the bishop, and his inexhaustible patience, for which she loved him better than ever, and in her heart said, "I will try and win by love from henceforth."

She then ordered refreshments.

Now Sister Estelle had not tasted anything for some time but bread and water, and was, under this fare, only the shadow of herself. As Mother Clarissima saw this, it sent a pang through her heart. She was so genial in her imagining of the probable success of the bishop's mission, that she simply overflowed with benedictions to all the sisterhood, and took occasion to go out of her way to say a kind word to Sister Estelle; complimented her success in teaching the pupils, and charged her to stay and partake of the refreshments, although it was a departure from established rules.

Estelle hesitated, but with a rare smile, said, "Thank you," and seating herself, remained, although some of the clergy present looked frowningly upon this lapsing from rules. She was pale, faint, and faint.

ished with fasting, and felt grateful to God, and kindly to Lady Clarissima for so unexpectedly offering her a share of the food.

Delicate slices of bread-and-butter sandwiches, cold tongue, jelly-cake, and a variety of other kinds, ice cream and fragrant tea and coffee were among the good things provided, and which were, some of them, especially acceptable to the famished nun.

She was filled with wonder. What did it mean? Wherefore this respite? Was her faith anew to be assailed? But constantly acting in the fear of God, she determined to stand fast, and witness a good confession. As she anticipated, ere the repast was ended, the Superioress found a seat beside her, and rolling back the divan on which they sat, had a little private talk.

“Estelle, darling,” said she, in her most persuasive way, “I am glad to see you eat. It has hurt me to have you fast and suffer so much.”

“Has it, Mother Clarissima?” she said, wistfully.

“It has indeed,” was her reply; “and now, dear, do not go on in this way, you hurt so many others; for my sake, soften a little.”

“I am doing this for the dear Lord’s sake,” was the response.

“But it is all so unnecessary; you can be a true saint all the better for being in the fold of the church. Oh, Estelle, I have within the last week had

such a revelation of what suffering is, in a dream, that I cannot bear to have any human being made to endure it."

"It is the Lord's work upon your heart," tearfully replied Estelle.

"Well, I hope it is," was the reply; "and I am determined to influence you to save yourself from it. It is no use to set yourself against the church, she is so powerful. As well might a mole seek to move a mountain."

"But do you not forget that the Lord is infinite in power?" replied Estelle. "He can remove the mountain into the sea, and He has said that true faith can do likewise. If according to His will, there is no limit to it."

The Superioress was strangely moved by this unpremeditated speech, and knew not what to reply. At length she recovered herself sufficiently to say,—

"I am sorry, Sister Estelle, that you will not let me help you."

A great change had, indeed, come over the Superioress. Her kindly disposition to all made it difficult for her to be as firm and exacting as her position required. She had hoped that she would succeed in influencing Sister Estelle to ease off a little in her faith, that she might persuade the clergy of the church council to be patient, and give her a longer probation. She had set her heart on this. She

found, however, that she had seemingly made no headway, as far as the nun was concerned, and the gathering in the parlor separated without any satisfaction in this direction. Mother Clarissima was revolving the matter as she went to her room, and putting her hand in her pocket for her pencil to record her plans for the morrow, she pulled out a Japanese napkin, in which was folded a poem. Some one of the sisters had put it there. She was in an impressible mood, from having so recently taken leave of her lover, and could relish reading poetry. She was, indeed, in quest of something choice to show the bishop when he returned, which he would commend her taste in selecting. In a tumult of feeling, she read that soul-thrilling lyric, "The Drop of Water," which so vividly pictures the agony of torment inflicted, in the years gone by, on one who simply confessed Christ! But this was only one of millions of sufferers in the cruel papal persecutions, that for twelve hundred and sixty years had the power to condemn to torture all heretics dwelling under its sway.

THE DROP OF WATER.

(INQUISITION—GOA, 1560.)

- "They have chained me in the central hall,
And are letting drops of water fall
On my forehead so close to the granite wall,
Drop—drop.

They were cold at first, but they now are warm,
 And I feel a prick like the prick of a thorn,
 Which comes with the fall of each drop so warm,

Drop—drop.

A circle I feel beginning to form
 A circle of fire round each drop so warm,
 A circle that throbs to the prick of the thorn,

Drop—drop.

The circle is growing between my eyes,
 Each drop that falls increases its size,
 And a flame of fire upward flies.

At each

Drop—drop.

It's growing larger, my God! the pain
 Of this awful, damnable, circular flame,
 Cutting its way through my throbbing brain,

Drop—drop.

It's growing larger, dilating my brain,
 Before its circular, throbbing flame,
 Till I feel like a universe of pain,

Drop—drop.

Suns of fire are falling fast.

Drop—drop.

On to my brain, O God! can this last?

Drop—drop.

The stars of the universe all beat time,
 As each raging sun of heat and flame
 Falls with a measured throb on my brain,

Drop—drop.

Time has grown as large as my brain,

Drop—drop.

Ten million years of agonized pain
 Lie between the fall of each sun of flame,

Drop—drop.

Something is coming!

Drop—drop.

Something is going to happen !

Drop—

Something has snapped !

The falling suns cease !

O God ! can it be that you 've sent me release ?

Is this death, this feeling of exquisite peace ?

It is death."

The Little Mother had been softened and ready to cry from her want of success with her friend Estelle, and as she read she felt that this must be a true picture of suffering of a kind that she, in her late reflections, had not imagined. "I am afraid it is too true," she murmured, and the tears came freely, and her heart was in her cry. It was the bitterness of a pent-up soul in darkness, groping for light.

At length, as the tears cleared, she glanced again at the line next to the heading,—

INQUISITION — GOA, 1560.

"More than three hundred years ago," she murmured, "and the system is not all done away with yet. We have traces of it in our discipline of nuns who turn from the faith."

The revelation that the Pope could sanction the crime of incest, and make it no crime, because of the bribe of money and influence, had unchained her woman's wits and set her thinking ; and doubtless, too, the bishop's words had power. She would no longer adopt the code of barbaric ages, as it concerned her treatment of the sisters. Some way, she

would see that every one condemned should be set at liberty ; banished from the institution they might be in some cases, but should be free to return to friends, or wherever they wished.

As she sat by her window, and looked out upon the lovely scene before her, "What a beautiful world," she mused, "and yet how many are miserable. Henceforth, it shall be my part to make as many happy as I can."

Suddenly she remembered that there were nuns starving in four cells of the tombs, as the wing basement was called.

Heretofore, in aiding in the disciplining of the nuns, she had thought that she did God service. Now she felt a responsibility of guilt incurred. She resolved to visit their cells at once, and give them food and water, and lessen their misery all in her power.

With her to decide was to act, and donning a close-fitting head-gear—a mask for disguise,—and a dark duster, she took a lamp to the store-room, and filled a basket with food—a bottle of milk, a can of water, and four drinking cups,—and with her dark lantern went out the secret door that led to the tombs.

Her heart sank within her as she thought of the scenes she must witness. How she longed to call her right-hand man, Hosea, and have him protect her. But it would not do. She hoped that Fathers Krafts, Williams and Pecci would not appear and

upset her plan. They had gone to their rooms in a monastic building not far away, and she had no reason to think they were in the vicinity of the wing.

Passing the gravelled walk and the hawthorn hedge, she opened the ponderous door and entered number six. Only a few days before she had locked the nun Esther in that prison cell, for persistently saying that she did not believe the Pope infallible, and that she would not worship saints, but only God.

“She may be a dreadful apostate,” said the lady superior to herself, “but I’ll not see her pine away. If God chooses to punish her, it is another thing.”

The lantern’s light fell full on the face of the nun. Sister Esther was soundly asleep on her couch, pale, but not emaciated. What could it mean? She had prepared herself to see a living, or possibly a dead skeleton, and here the sister was, apparently, in better health than when she locked her in!

She had heard the story of Daniel in the lion’s den, and it flashed over her that God had preserved her from death. A solemn awe came over her. She almost feared to breathe. Esther must be a saint; one whom God loved and preserved. One of the drinking cups fell, and waked the sleeper, who started up in surprise.

“Have no fear,” said the lady superior gently, “I

am only a Sister of Mercy, whom God has sent to you. I have brought you food ; and if the Virgin so wills it, you shall be set free. But do n't give me the praise, or reveal my name, if you know me. This is of God."

"Oh, how kind you are!" exclaimed Esther, gratefully. "It is the Lord indeed who sent you. Now I know that He hears me when I call on his holy name."

"At any rate, I could not get rid of the impression that I must come."

Deftly spreading a napkin on the bit of a table, she left her with food for twenty-four hours, without making herself known.

She then visited the other cells, with a similar result, only the sisters were in each case waked by her coming in, and were not the least alarmed. It was a joyful sound. As she had finished the round of the occupied cells, and stepped outside, it occurred to her that, possibly, through some neglect, an old, withered nun, called "Crazy Nell," might still be in the large cell, number five, although she had been consigned to be carried to the Insane Retreat, established for such cases in a neighboring county.

Resolving to make thorough work, she again opened the door with her key, and entered. Somehow she caught her foot in a crevice, stumbled and fell ; the lantern went out ; she lost her key, and the strong spring on the self-locking door closed it with a slam, as

if violently pushed by mortal hands. Was it possible that Crazy Nell had slipped out, and was this her work?

Here was a dilemma.

The Superioress herself imprisoned in the tombs, which might not be visited for weeks! As this flashed into her mind, she eagerly felt around for the key, but without success. After carefully searching in vain, she came to the conclusion that she must have whirled it outside the door as she fell. She thought that she remembered hearing its thud on the pebbles in the instant ere the door closed. She sank down in a miserable heap, and wept bitterly. What was there to prevent her from starving? All the food in the basket she had given to the nuns. She had, an hour before, tried to imagine the slow torture of madness brought on by the regular, interminable drop, drop, of water falling on the brain, but now it seemed to her that nothing could exceed the slow agony of the horrors of starvation.

“Oh, how cruel I have been!” she cried. “I have never thought of making the case of others my own, and now my retribution has come.”

It is true that for a little while, since her bright out-look in regard to her union with the bishop, she had let her woman's heart assert itself, but this was exceptional, — never, until now, had she really felt for those in bonds, as bound with them.

How in a flash the deeds of her convent life came

up for review. How she had listened complacently to the hard judgment of the clergy, in condemning suspected nuns. How she had obdurately locked them in their cells, thinking that she was doing saintly service. And now, strangest of all, as she had measured to others, it was meted to her.

“Oh, what shall I do?” she cried. “Who will come and deliver me?”

The grim walls of the dark cell seemed to echo, “No one! no one! You can not expect any one to come. You must stay here and starve, as have others before you.”

Almost wild with terror, she tried to shout. She screamed in her anguish, but suddenly remembered that the walls were several feet thick, and so muffled that no sound could possibly escape outside. Soothing down, she mused,—

“I am glad I fed the sisters before I die, and I am glad that masses are being said for the repose of my soul.”

Again, as she thought of the great happiness almost in her grasp, when the bishop returned, contrasted with her death of ignominy, and his disappointment, she swooned away in sheer despair and grief.

XVI.

Unmerciful Walls.

THE construction of the buildings of the Romish church, especially in regard to the thick walls and niches, in the peculiar foundations and basements, is ever a subject of remark to thoughtful observers. There is, sometimes, a succession of arches and cells, designed, it is supposed, in convents, to confine the refractory; in large churches and cathedrals, to secrete arms and ammunition, should occasion require. It is reported, on good authority, that the cells and under-ground passages in the cellar of the Jesuit college at Washington are fit to alarm loyal Americans. Of what possible use are such walls in a free country?

Madonna Hall, so regal in exterior beauty, was at first an exception to this rule of building. There were, it is true, cells under the main edifice, but it was found when nuns shut up there became hysterical or insane, their voices could be heard in the rooms above and in the adjoining grounds. The clerical party, guided by Archbishop Bland, said this would not

do; a wing must be built for disciplinary purposes. It was remote from the rooms occupied by the sisters, pupils, and callers. Massive walls of masonry, made to smother sound, rendered it impossible for the voice of any human being confined there to be heard outside. This, the desolate prisoner, Clarissima, in her agony realized full well.

We cannot suppose, however, in these United States, demolished buildings could tell tales, like those of Mexico, since 1857, and even to this day. We choose rather to imagine that some merciful Hosea averted the execution of cruel decrees.

Hosea beheld the laying of the corner-stone amid imposing ceremonies. He saw the mighty wing rise step by step. It was said specially to be devoted to holy, mysterious uses, and none of the pupils or sisterhood were permitted to enter its precincts. When Hosea thought of the grim rooms and niches in the basement called the "The Tombs," he was thrilled with nameless horror. He knew full well that as light dawned and revealed the superstition of their belief, that some of the nuns would protest, and in every case, unless fortunate enough to escape, this meant imprisonment, possibly death.

While he loathed the system more than tongue can tell, what could he do? Should he forsake the old rotten hulk, and leave the innocent without a helper, or should he remain, and do the work which he felt was given him to do?

The fact that Mother Clarissima so fully trusted him, gave him a great advantage. No matter what he did he was never suspected or reprimanded. He felt that this was providentially ordered. Girding on fresh courage, he resolved to watch his opportunity and still be faithful to God in doing deeds of mercy.

He was efficient in all his appointed duties, and lived for a purpose, happy in his sublime trust in God. Glad was he that no clerical visitor dared invade his sanctum, for there, as he groomed his horses, read, prayed, or sang in low voice lofty hymns of praise, it was to him a very Bethel.

Obadiah of old fed the Lord's prophets by fifty in two caves; so the Madonna Hall steward, as the years passed, whenever there were prisoners, repaired to the Tombs, at midnight, opened cell after cell, and left food for those that would otherwise have perished.

Strangely, the clergy did not in this case follow up the discipline after the offender was committed to the cells. Hosea, at the dictum of lady Clarissima, had full charge, subject only to Father Pecci as his assistant tomb commissioner, and accordingly could act out the impulses of his noble nature. It often happened that nuns, weary of convent life, were enabled to escape before being immured in the underground prison. The bishop and the Superioress were not as relentless as were the old-time persecu-

tors. The clergy brought complaints, and insisted on punishment, as they knew any backsliding from the confessional. By some of them, the bishop was thought dilatory in the matter of discipline. Had he been more exacting, he would doubtless have interviewed Hosea, and criticised him for allowing so many to escape his hands, when in assumed pursuit. The philosophy of the Bishop in action was this: "If they do not want to stay let them go, there are plenty more to fill their places."

For all this, there was a cruel system of penalty attached to the rules of the institution, which had never been officially abolished. The clergy in the vicinity were accustomed to call on Archbishop Bland to pass judgment on contumacious nuns, saying Bishop Berlin was too merciful and lenient.

To return to Lady Clarissima :

When she became conscious, it was all like a frightful dream. "Why am I here?" she asked herself. "Is it not because I have been so hard to the poor nuns? How could I be so cruel? The bishop said that the church had fallen into grave errors. I see it, and cruelty to nuns is one of the worst. Now I must die because of it, and I deserve my fate."

She again sobbed heart-brokenly, crying and praying: "Oh, how cruel to make such thick walls. I could be saved if these were not muffled and made to stifle sound. Oh, hard-hearted priests, I understand you." "O blessed God, if Thou wilt deliver me, I will

see that no nun shall ever moan helplessly in these cells. I'll have carpenters and masons come, and these walls shall have windows, and be thrown open to the light of day. But it is useless to plan; I shall never escape! never escape! Oh, how dreadful to starve by inches! O Lord, if Thou wilt please deliver me, I will serve Thee all the days of my life."

She did not once think of praying to Mary. In her agony, the creature was forgotten,—only the great Creator could help.

As she said this, a sweet peace filled her soul, such as she had never known before, and she felt like saying, "I can trust Him."

She was at length startled by the turning of the lock. As the door was swung open, she called out: "Who is there?"

"It's only me,—Hosea. Why, Mother Clarissima, how came you here?" as he brought the lantern to shine on her face.

"O Hosea, I never was so glad! The Lord sent you." Then, as he gently lifted her up, "How came you to look for me here?"

"I was impressed to come. After I found the key beside the door, I could not rest till I investigated."

"That is so like you, Hosea; you are always on hand at the right time. It is so good in you. I can not thank you enough. I should have died if you had not come."

"I found you, Mother Clarissima," Hosea boldly

said, "because I have been stirred up to care for the sisters that are left to die by the slow horrors of starvation."

"You are right, Hosea. The Lord stirred you up, and I owe my life to you. I have suffered an age in this night, and I made a solemn vow, if the Lord delivered me, that I would do as I would be done by, and have a heart of pity for the helpless sisters. I feel faint, and must lean on you. I am as weak as if I had had a siege of sickness. Now, everything looks so different to me. I must think we are very wrong as a church; something must be done. My religion sternly forbids me to think, reason, or argue, least of all criticise its teachings. But in my distress and woe, I promised the Lord that I would, and I believe He sent you in answer to my prayer just as truly as I believe that I am alive. I do praise Him!"

"I trust He did. I want all my movements guided by Him."

He then helped her safely into the mansion, she leaning heavily upon him, and in a low voice showering benedictions on him all the way.

To retrace a little :

Just as she had finished the rounds of the four cells, and was entering the large cell, Hosea having started for his "night work," thought he heard the outside door bang in shutting. In making his calls, he found that food had been left in every cell, and each nun was sure that the voice of the sister of

mercy was that of the Superioress. It was too great a change to hope for, but their hearts were made glad, and after other night duties, which occupied some hours, he went to see that all was right in the large cell, Number Five, little dreaming the lady Superioress herself was there imprisoned.

After entering the mansion, as she took leave of him for the night, she said, —

“You seem to me like a messenger from heaven. I am so happy to be free. I shall now know how to pity those shut up in prison. God bless you. Good-night, my son.”

“Good-night, Mother Clarissima,” was the heartfelt reply.

Hastening to her room, and closing the door, so great was her exhaustion that she laid down on her couch without undressing, and peacefully slept till morning.

With her waking powers stronger than ever, was this new resolution, born of that dreadful lesson in the cell. “As I am a living woman,” thought she, “I wish some way could be devised to give our clergy a taste of what they so freely prescribe for others. But for myself, I can no longer be cruel to nuns.”

Mother Clarissima’s rooms were connected with the precincts of Hosea by telephone, and she often had occasion to summon him by this means.

About a week after her cell adventure and release, one morning, at nine o’clock, she called to him,—

"Hosea, you there?"

"Present," was his answer.

"You may harness Tucky Ho into the small carriage, dress yourself suitably, and drive round to the front entrance. You are to take me to the city."

"All right. I'll be there directly," he replied.

Now this was unusual; but since her fright the lady seemed to lean on and look to Hosea more than ever before, and now she wanted to confer with him, and take an airing at the same time.

Hosea was well dressed and had a dignified manner. The Superioress was arrayed in her costliest black costume, with white head-band, and nun's bonnet, and large cape collar, and made a fine medieval appearance.

"Now, my son," said she, as he helped her into the carriage, "before we start for the city I wish you to drive slowly through the grounds. I must examine if the gardeners have done their work well." Then, as they drove around, she said, "See, the terraces and lawn are well shaven, and really have a neat appearance. I want to look at the hawthorn hedge beyond the graveled walk." On reaching it, by a branch off from the serpentine drive-way that receded from and approached the lofty mansion, she added, "There, I thought it would be apt to be a little shabby, because it is near the wing, which visitors never see. You may tell the gardeners that this hedge must be better trimmed, just as well kept as if

in front of the main building. But I do not want any flowers here. I shall have masons and carpenters at work on these walls and basement cells as soon as the bishop comes back. The clergy won't dare interfere then."

"Yes, Madame," replied Hosea.

Then, as they came again in front of the mansion, and drove towards the street,—

"See, Hosea," with a chill of undefined emotion, "those climbing roses over that arbor where the Virgin and Child stand."

"Yes," replied he; "that is a magnificent rose."

"I call it the Queen of the Prairie," said she; "but I may be mistaken in its name, there are so many roses. I can call it that, if I choose; what is to hinder? No one here knows as much as I do about flowers, and it is a poor story if I cannot call that rose what name I choose, do n't you think so?" This mechanically, while underneath was a strong current of conviction setting against image worship.

"Of course," replied Hosea, "on the same principle that you name a pet cat or dog. I do not attach much importance to it any way."

"I am glad you think so," she said, "for it pleases me that I can give names to the flowers that I do not know, that will be their names, and no one can dispute me. That is of little account, it is true," she added; "but as to the Virgin and Child, I used to pray to them whenever I passed this arbor, but, do

you know, since I had that terrible experience in the cell, I cannot pray to the Virgin or one of the saints any more, to save my life I cannot. I feel that it is blasphemy; I can only pray to God. What do you think of that?"

"You are quite right there. He says, 'Thou shalt have no other gods before me,'" was Hosea's delighted reply.

"Is that so? Well, that settles the matter," replied the lady, who was not familiar with the Bible.

"It does with me," was Hosea's reply.

"I am so glad; and here I've been dreading to talk with you about it, for I could not tell my thoughts to any one of the sisters, as they confess to the priests, and the bishop has gone to Rome. I thought, of course, you'd think me an apostate."

"Oh, no," replied Hosea. "The apostates are those who worship something else besides God."

"It must be so," said the lady, in deep conviction. "What a revelation is this,—and how mistaken I have been all my life?" Then, as they were driving through the grounds, "Stop a moment, my son. You see here the image of St. Joseph, who is a patron saint, and resides in this grotto. Our clergy tell us, and I have taught the same myself, that it is of great use to seek his protection, and that there is no end to the calamities that would have befallen us if we had not prayed to him: the Madonna first, then St. Peter, St. Joseph, St. James and St. John, and all the rest

of the divinities. Now just as true as God commands us to worship Him only, this is idolatry, and exceedingly sinful. I've done with it, and sweep them all from the board, and I'm sure the bishop is of the same mind, and, as soon as he returns, we'll have every vestige of sham worship removed from our midst, clergy or no clergy. I must say that I never knew what peace was till I found it in the Lord Jesus Christ, by calling on his name, when I was in the depths. I then believed that He was able to save me."

Hosea had been praying for this, and yet could scarcely believe the things he heard. Was it indeed true that Mother Clarissima had turned to God? His whole soul was filled with praise, but his words were few.

Soon they passed out of the grounds, for the lady had errands in town, and while on the way, by illogical transition, confided to Hosea that a part of her business in the city was to pay for masses for her soul's repose, and if possible do away with the pains of purgatory.

"The business is almost concluded," she continued. "I've only to pay money and take receipts; then I shall be at rest as it concerns anxiety for my soul's estate in the world to come."

Hosea saw that she did not yet fully comprehend the plan of salvation through Christ, and longed to shed light on her pathway.

"Mother Clarissima," he said, "will you allow me to say a few words?"

“Certainly, Hosea. I want your opinion.”

“You only pray to the Lord of heaven and earth as your God?” he asked.

“Yes; I now worship Him only,” was her reply.

“Then you believe on Him and receive Him as your Saviour, and feel that He has forgiven all your sins? for He says, ‘Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.’ We can be saved in a moment. It is only look and live, or have life in Him.”

“Is that all? Oh, this is all so new; but I do believe, I do receive Him as my only Saviour; and am I not then a child of God?”

“You certainly are. He gives you that power the moment you believe, and His shed blood washes away your sins, and saves you from all punishment.”

“Then of what possible use are the masses?” asked the lady, with tearful earnestness.

“They are no use whatever,” was the reply. “They rob the Lord of His glory as if He were not an all-sufficient Redeemer. He saves us by His one offering of His blood on the cross. This trying to patch up a religion that leaves out the Lord from heaven as a complete Saviour, is of the Wicked One, and must come to nought.”

“How blind we have been,” replied the lady. “We bargained for the masses to be said, and the money is now due. What is best to be done?”

“I would wait till the bishop returns,” said Hosea,

“and see what he thinks about it. The clergy do not care for the money at present, and by that time you will have clearer views of this great salvation, and will know what to say. You will see that masses are the most abominable part of the idolatry of the Catholic church. The blasphemy of supposing that the priest, no matter how corrupt, can make a wafer-god the real Lord Jesus Christ, and eat him. The creature make the Creator! It is too abominably absurd, and too fearfully blasphemous to be endured for an instant.”

“I am grieved at heart that we have been so wicked,” returned the lady, in a gush of tears. “But what good news it is that there is no purgatory for those that are forgiven.”

“None at all. Jesus says, ‘Whosoever believeth on me hath eternal life, and shall not come into condemnation.’ Where is there any chance for the burnings you fear?”

“Why, how beautiful that is! I have had all my worry for nothing. Oh, if I had only found the true Saviour before. I have been so sensitive to suffering that the fear of after-death burnings has shadowed me all my life. Now I rejoice in God, my Saviour, and long to tell others that ‘Whosoever believes and receives the Lord Christ, will be happy now and hereafter. But if this faith is widely accepted, will it not affect the income of the church?’”

“Most surely it will. The doctrine of purgatory

was borrowed from paganism, and grafted on the Romish system, simply to put money in the hands of ecclesiastics.

“What a shame!” was the reply. “I do rejoice that I am saved, and shall not come into condemnation and be made to suffer.”

Hosea, in order to test her further, said,—

“I wish there were less suffering among the nuns.”

“There shall be. I am planning for it, and shall need your help. When the bishop returns, we shall arrange for a different ordering of things. Every brick in Madonna Hall shall yet testify for the Lord alone.”

XVII.

A. Mutual. Secret.

HOSEA and Mother Clarissima had an intensely interesting conversation as the carriage wound along the driveway of the park and outside the convent grounds on the thoroughfare leading to the city. Then for awhile each was silent in deep thought.

“What I want to say, further, Hosea,” said the lady, at length, “is, that cell Number Nine must be vacated to-night. Sister Jessie, who is shut in there, is alive; for I have the key to the Tombs, and you have another. She was condemned to die for apostasy — was kept on scant fare for weeks, — and the last two weeks of her imprisonment has not had a mouthful of food except what you and I have given her. God bless you, my son! I have watched you and found you out. I am heart and soul with you in helping off condemned nuns. Help them all you can. If you need money, let me know; and if we want success in this we must still sacredly keep our own counsel!”

“Noble Mother Clarissima!” he exclaimed, the tears starting. “A blessing awaits you for this.”

“I have it already, my son. I was never so happy in my life.”

When Hosea found that Mother Clarissima was firm in her decision to befriend the nuns in their extremity, she looked to him like an angel of mercy. It invested her really fine face with a halo of loveliness.

“I shall need Number Nine to-morrow, or the night after,” she said, “as I must this once go through the farce of putting another nun there. Can you have it ready to-night, so that Father Pecci can do duty to-morrow.”

“Oh, yes, indeed.”

“You know Sister Estelle, our music teacher, Hosea?”

“Yes,” he replied. “At the musical receptions in the parlor she sometimes sent for me to sing tenor.”

“Did she? I had forgotten. Well, until of late she has been the most obedient of nuns.”

“You don’t mean that she has been condemned?” asked he, eagerly.

“Listen, my son, how it came about. At the school examination we had a few Protestants present, friends of some of the scholars, and the very next day several Testaments and tracts were found. I only discovered one. Sister Estelle secured a Testament, and read it. Do you know, Hosea, that if our

nuns were allowed to read the Bible, that our nunnery would shortly collapse? The Bible and our system must be antagonistic. The clergy say it won't do. Sister Estelle read that book, which the Pope calls pernicious, and there was an end to her obedience."

"Is n't that a little strange?" asked Hosea, with a peculiar intonation of voice.

"Oh, no," was the reply; "it always works in that way. Sister Estelle was brought up in a convent, and has been kept so closely that she has had no possible chance to become heretical. She had a training in music, being ten years in a Philadelphia nunnery before she came here. I suppose she thinks now, because we have petted her, that she can do as she pleases."

"Why not allow her to keep on teaching. She is lady-like and quiet."

"Hosea, my son, you little know what you are talking about. After Estelle read the Testament, which I found hidden in her room, she called a number of sisters together, and told them what she had read. She said that Jesus alone could forgive sin, thus striking at the very root of our system. And I see now, Hosea, that the dear soul was right. She was eloquent, and had them all crying as if their hearts would break, when I suddenly opened the door, after I had listened awhile to what she was saying. There was a scattering, you may believe, but Sister Estelle stood up bravely, and said,—

“I ought to obey God rather than men, and if it costs me my life, I will confess Christ alone as my Saviour. As for the Virgin and the saints, I can never think of worshiping them.’

“Now I suppose you’ll say that I am just like her, and I see that I am. That fearful cell experience made a different woman of me. Estelle’s lessons then struck home.

“Well, the clergy said that she must be silenced, or the contagion would spread. So she was fed on bread and water, and now, unless she retracts, she will be doomed to a basement cell. I love her dearly, and wish I could think of some way of saving her. I’ll tell you, my son, if you can manage to have her removed to a safe retreat, it will do my heart good. She might get another start in life.”

“I am sure that I can. I will be on hand, and see that she is taken away,” he replied, joyfully flushing with emotion.

Sister Estelle was a great favorite in the institution. She was graceful, accomplished, and far more intelligent than most of the sisterhood. Hosea thought it a pity to be so abrupt in the decision. “Why not wait awhile,” he said, “before resorting to extreme measures?”

“Hosea,” gravely replied the lady, “the clergy are clamorous, and we must keep our interest a secret, or we shall fail. I know what his lordship would say. It would be to do as I please. He has gone to Rome

on an errand which, if successful, will make my life very happy. I feel strangely softened, and want everybody happy, too. Still, if I am not seemingly strict in ruling this sisterhood, I am liable to be set aside before he returns. The fathers have no patience with slack management. It must always be rigid. If a sister shows signs of being uneasy, she must be closely watched. So, you see, Hosea, that it wo n't do for me to show that I sympathize with them in the least. Hear what the church says through her priest, in the famous book called, 'Ethica Christiana.' I have it by heart.

"It is lawful to take the life of another if that be the only means of preserving one's own honor and reputation. The church knows no compassion where her honor and interest are concerned. She can not err, and it is praiseworthy to execute her infallible decisions when called to do so."

"Murder is licensed there very plainly," remarked Hosea. "It is most abominable."

"As for me," replied the lady, "I can never again help put such a decree in practice. I abhor it from the depths of my soul. I trust the Lord has forgiven me for the things I have done ignorantly in unbelief. And now I want you to free Sister Estelle."

"I think I can do it," he calmly replied, while his heart was praising God for so wonderfully opening the eyes of the Superioress to see things clearly.

"I must, of course," said she, "when she is con-

demned, conduct her to her cell, but you are a man of expedients, and can see her fed and taken away."

"I will do it," he replied, earnestly.

He had thought and prayed much over Estelle's case, and before he knew of her conversion longed to tell her of the way of life. Through his prayers and efforts she had found it. Could he not also be honored in saving her from suffering? He had at length strong faith that he should be, and his heart was at rest as it regarded the matter.

Leaving the Lady Superioress at Bellevue, where she was to dine with the Leavenworths, he made haste to arrange for the rescue, at the Aid Society.

It was quite awhile prior to this that Grace Leavenworth had met Hosea, found he was in the faith, and from him learned the wants of the occasional refugees from Madonna Hall, and neighboring convents.

This information was at the time just what she needed, in addition to that she had, to give her society an active existence. Whenever he came in town, he was to call at the Aid Rooms, and leave or take orders. He was charged to apply to her in any emergency, and she and her associates would be ready to help to the extent of their ability.

And when a nun was once in that fold she was as safe as if in her father's house. Mrs. Leavenworth being president of the parent society, managed to inaugurate many plans for shielding those that needed a protecting wing. On this occasion, Hosea found

Grace and Ella Southbury in the office, and very ready to listen to his report of the case in hand.

"It is a hazardous thing that you are to do, to-night," said Grace, as she learned the details of what he had planned, "but I believe that One will help you, and give you success."

"He always has," replied Hosea; "I could not attempt it otherwise."

"Thank Him, and take courage," rejoined Grace. "He is on the side of right, and will fight our battles for us, as my dear mother often says. But now to business," added she, in her brisk way. "We have a dress and disguise ready, have n't we, Miss Southbury? Oh, yes, here they are; you put them away; and here's the mask for the effigy which is to be put in the niche of burial."

These were compactly put up, and by Hosea placed in the space under the carriage seat. It was then arranged that Miss Leavenworth should have a trusty friend in waiting with a carriage at midnight, outside the convent park entrance, opposite the barn.

Hosea attended to his duties as steward in getting house supplies, and punctually at the hour appointed, called for the Superioress at Bellevue, and in due time they arrived at Madonna Hall.

At midnight, Hosea cautiously made his way to Number Nine, and found Mary Brown, alias Sister Jessie, the New England nun, supposed to be de-

ceased, arrayed in the disguise he had brought from the Aid Society. Noiselessly she accompanied him out of the Tombs into the moonlight, he turning to lock the ponderous door. Reaching the hedge bordering on the highway, he opened a concealed passage, and conducted her to the conveyance in waiting, in care of Colonel Southbury. In a few word he told him the case of Sister Estelle, asking that the carriage be sent for her on the third night.

The chaise moved quietly off, while he returned, and going into the Tombs, put the cell to rights, and prepared the effigy, with its death-like mask, ready for Pecci's inspection the next day. Father Pecci was commissioner and convent coroner to certify when a nun was dead. Now this man had a mortal terror of death,—could not endure to look at, or touch, a dead body, and only the money paid him, and the honor of office, led him to retain the post. He was just the one inadvertently to help Hosea in saving life. The steward kept the father's secret of his weakness in the presence of death, as he coveted the place, and was ever ready to certify, facts or no facts.

The process was simple. When the effigy was ready, Hosea led Father Pecci into the dimly-lighted cell, where lay the supposed nun, covered to the chin with a winding sheet, and all he had to do was to guide Pecci's nervous hand in the gloom to touch the cold face or mask. When this was quickly done, the

father, with one hand to his nose for fear of infection, made for the out-door air, and was ready to take his oath that the nun had departed this life. In the circumstances, the figure the flying father cut was amusing, but Hosea had his mind on his work and remained to put the straw image in its niche, and, after adding the required quantity of lime, to wall it up with bricks and mortar.

While he hated the system that he must circumvent with such stratagem and pretence, he rejoiced that he had saved a precious life. Mary Brown, so long mourned in her lonely New Hampshire home, through his and Grace Leavenworth's efficiency, was the very next day returned to the stricken household.

Her history was not unlike that of many others. Three years before, getting tired of her country home, she had sought to earn her living in the city. Unhappily, she joined a church, which was really in the interests of Rome,—was drawn under fascinating influences, and as an easy way of getting more education, and a chance to teach, was persuaded to enter the Madonna Hall convent. The religious advantages had also been glowingly depicted, and later she was led to believe that by taking the veil she would be sure of salvation. She awoke to find that she had been deceived. She had had good Sabbath-school instruction while at home, and the false and blasphemous doctrines of the Catechism became unendurable

when she compared them with the wonderful teachings of the Bible. She prayed to God, renounced what she had tried to receive, was known as a discontented nun, and refusing to come to terms, was under ban and punishment.

When she reached home, it was to her friends like having her from the dead. Delighted beyond measure to be free from that which can be, when priests are corrupt, the worst form of slavery, she made a confident of her mother, telling her how she had been condemned to die without judge or jury. And now, should the clergy hear of her escape, they would have it in their hearts to recover or destroy her.

Madonna Hall community, and all allied to it, Mother Clarissima and Hosea excepted, were unsuspecting of her rescue, supposing her effectually silenced.

The next day after Father Pecci's hurried autopsy, which, as usual, made him faint, Hosea put the cell in order, for occupancy by Sister Estelle. As he went on with his work, brain and heart were busy. It was a rare joy to him to know that the Mother Clarissima was coming into the light, and was in full sympathy with him in saving the nuns. It seemed too wonderful to be true. But, on the other hand, he thought it a risk to lock the Sister Estelle in the cell, as he feared the priests might discover his attempt to make her free.

The evening following, the sister was summoned to the chapel, and Fathers Krafts and Pecci were a com-

mittee to make a final effort to have her recant. She was firm, and resisted all their demands. She would rather die than deny her Lord. The Testament which Hosea had left in a pile of music had been studied, and committed to memory, and when the book was destroyed with curses by Father Krafts, who happened to be officiating in the chapel of the nunnery when the discovery was made, although deprived, she was not robbed of God's Word, having many precious chapters in her memory.

Not long after the trial, the Superioress, coming into the hall, called out, "Lelia, Mary, Addie, and Celia, bring Sister Estelle into the judgment room."

This was an apartment adjoining the chapel. Archbishop Bland, Fathers Krafts, Buhler, and Pecci, were in attendance, as they severally had talked and labored with her, and now were resolved to have the matter finally settled. The sisters signified to Sister Estelle that she was summoned to appear before her judges.

She arose with a loving look, and said, as she dismissed her scholars,—

"Come to the Lord Jesus Christ, the only door, for he that climbeth up some other way is a thief and a robber. Judgments are near at hand. Escape for your lives!"

Then serenely closing the piano, and arranging her music, she turned and accompanied the nuns to the dreaded room.

There sat her judges in solemn conclave, thinking in their blindness that they were doing God service.

As she appeared before them, the Archbishop began,—

“What have you to say for yourself, Sister Estelle? Are you ready to be confessed to-day?”

“No, your grace, I shall never be confessed again.”

A look of cruel anger came over the Archbishop's rubicund face, as he said, roughly,—

“We may make you. Remember, we can torture you till you are ready to confess.”

On second thoughts, however, as he was impressed with her queenly air, and called to mind that “any one can lead a horse to drink, but a dozen men cannot make him drink,” he suddenly changed ground, saying, with an icy smile,—

“Will you not retract, just a little? Remember, if you will, the new music teacher shall be sent away, and you shall retain your honorable position.”

“You shall, indeed!” echoed the Mother Superior, with an encouraging look.

“Sister Estelle, we have great hopes of you,” added Father Krafts. “The Superioress has a western appointment in view, and you were our elect lady for that vacancy.”

“It has no temptation for me,” was the calm reply. “Once I was blind, and now I see. Shall I forget what the Lord has done for me, and turn again to darkness

and sin? I have found the Lord Jesus Christ, and He has given me eternal life, because I believe on Him."

"What a darling angel she is!" thought Clarissima. "My soul is knit to her soul!"

"Hush your mouth!" cried the Archbishop. "You've sealed your doom. We've no demand for heretics here! You will now be locked in cell No. 9, which will not be opened for two weeks, when your dead body will be taken out and buried. As you will not recant, you will now accompany the Mother Superior."

Sister Estelle stood with the look of a queen, saying,—

"Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And may He give you repentance unto Life. Farewell."

Then she followed Mother Clarissima to what all present thought her living tomb.

The nuns turned to hide their tears. Sister Estelle had been the life of the institution; all the music and song clung to her, and since she had been converted she had obtained a copy of "Gospel Songs," and before the officials were aware the entire academy and nunnery were singing the Gospel. This was easily done, as some of the pupils from Protestant families had become familiar with the songs elsewhere. The effect was wonderful, and afterwards not a few dated their conversion to the singing of those hymns, so full of penitence, praise and true worship.

Mother Clarissima showed Estelle into her cell, and said in a low voice, as she wept on her neck and kissed her,—

“Keep dressed, and be in readiness, for I have planned to have you escape to-night. Hosea will take you to a carriage at twelve.”

Estelle was almost overpowered with gratitude.

“This is so kind of you!” she exclaimed. “You will not lose your reward; I trust that I am one of the least of His little ones.”

“Bless your heart, you’ve stood nobly,” whispered the Lady Clarissima. Then hastily kissing her, she locked her in the sepulchre-like cell, and returned to the main building.

Before leaving, the Archbishop explained to the tearful nuns that they had reason to rejoice, as Sister Estelle could only be saved by the “Baptism of Blood,” that is, by an unnatural death. He even intimated that she might yet be canonized as a saint, through the efficacy of this stern penalty of the church.

It was some hours before midnight when Estelle was immured, and at last Hosea appeared, and silently conducted her to the carriage in waiting, and she found an asylum with kind friends ere the morning dawn.

XVIII.

Bishop Berlin's Letter.

ROME, August, 1889.

MY DEAR CLARISSIMA, — My letter on shipboard you have doubtless received. A kind Providence has prospered my mission, and I have joyful news to communicate. The Pope readily granted me an interview, and was very cordial, calling me his 'dear son.' He acceded to my request, and gave me a dispensation to marry. I will return soon and hasten our union. He also blessed my plan of issuing the New Testament.

I have so much that I want to tell you, dearest, for my soul is as if it had been swept over by a mighty tempest, and through the grace given me, I feel that I am coming out wholly on the Lord's side.

Since my arrival here, a converted Trappist priest, whom I knew in college, has given me "Guinness's Lectures on Romanism," also Birk's, Faber's and Newton's works on Prophecy, and day after day we sit down to discuss the positions taken, comparing them with the only true test, Holy Scripture. It has been a terrible struggle. I have spent sleepless nights over the great question, and have been much in prayer; and, my darling, there is no getting away from this conclusion: We are in truth the apostate church — the Anti-Christ of the New Testament.

The system is worldly and rotten, and, coming out, I disown allegiance to it, and it shall be my work henceforth to help God's blinded children from the wreck to the rock Christ Jesus.

I must tell you that I have read enormously. Among other things, Hon. Mr. Gladstone's "Vatican Decrees." It contains the gist of a most important matter. I will quote a few passages. In referring to his former article, he says, —

"I was speaking of the question whether a handful of the clergy are, or are not, engaged in an utterly hopeless visionary effort to Romanize the church and people of England. At no time since the reign of Bloody Mary has such a scheme been possible. But if it had been possible, in the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries, it would have become impossible in the nineteenth, when Rome has substituted for the proud boast of *semper eadem*, a policy of violence and a change of faith; when she has refurbished and polished anew every rusty tool she was fondly thought to have disused; when no one can become her convert without renouncing his moral and mental freedom, and placing his civil loyalty and duty at the mercy of another; and when she has equally repudiated modern thought and ancient history."

He then says that the people of England have a right, on purely civil grounds, to expect from their Roman Catholic fellow subjects some declaration of opinion, in reply to that ecclesiastical party in their church, who have laid down, in their name, principles adverse to the purity and integrity of civil allegiance.

The grand old man is correct, and an explanation is due in America as well. But I do suppose a straight-forward apology would be impossible with the Jesuit faction, who, with their sympathizers, are the only Catholics that aim to rule the country. When confronted with the light, they either slink away, or

strive to appear very innocent and pious, assume lamb-like airs, until they can quiet suspicion and resume their infamous work in the dark.

He says further, —

“It is the peculiarity of Roman theology that, by thrusting itself into the temporal domain, it naturally and even necessarily comes to be a frequent theme of political discussion. To quiet-minded Roman Catholics, it must be a subject of infinite annoyance, that their religion is, more than any other, the occasion of conflicts with the state, and of civil disquietude. This is brought upon them by the authorities of the church.

“The Pope of Rome is a trespasser on ground that belonged to the civil authority. All other Christian bodies are content with freedom in their own religious domain. They never pretend that the state is not its own master; make no religious claims to temporal possessions or advantages, and consequently are never in perilous collision with the state, as are the Roman Catholic leaders and their admirers.”

Gladstone goes on to say, —

“The Rome of the Middle Ages claimed universal monarchy. The modern Church of Rome has abandoned nothing — retracted nothing. And we know very well that a pledge from Catholics is worthless unless dictated by Rome.”

The Premier speaks of “the moral murder of stifling conscience and conviction.” This must be the case when a loyal Catholic tries the feat of keeping both his allegiance to his country and his vows to the Pope. It is like walking two opposite roads at the same time, which is impossible.

I must tell you, darling Clarissima, I find that there has been a great change in the mode of operations of the Romanists in both England and America. Years ago, they declared that their religion did not

in the least interfere with their duties as citizens ; the Pope's power to claim obedience was strictly and narrowly limited. It was denied that he had any right to interfere in civil government. Now, it is openly declared that he has this sovereign right in all lands, and that he will take possession as soon as he can, and he has the ridiculous cheek to call on everybody to help him. He really does outbeg all the mendicants I ever heard of. But this deceit was practised to beguile the nations, and gain time, a transparent trick that was long since discovered and as widely scorned.

"Let me come in," says the wild beast, assuming an inoffensive form and air. "I will never interfere, or do you any harm,—just let me lie down by your fireside."

The mild, pleading voice is believed, and the creature let into the body politic ; and after a little he is a mammoth beast, which begins to show his greedy appetite, indicating that he is ready to destroy and devour.

Am I wrong in calling the papal power a beast ? It is so called in the Revelations,—chapters thirteen and seventeen. For one, I have done with serving the behests of this destroyer, and am appalled when I reflect to what a pass it has brought us.

The dogma of infallibility is one of the greatest of religious frauds. It is decreed that "even if the judgments of the Pope do not appear to be infallible, they are unappealable, irreversible ; no matter what blunder he makes, as in the public school question, and all men, clerical and lay, are bound truly to obey, and from this Catholic rule no man can depart, save at the peril of his soul's salvation."

This I quote from church documents.

The Premier says again, "Individual servitude, however abject, will not satisfy the party now domi-

nant in the Latin church, the state must also be a slave."

The Pope claims, with the approval of the council, absolute obedience at the peril of salvation of every member of his communion. This, in open day, by a pontiff who has condemned free speech, free writing, free press, liberty of conscience, and the study of civil and ecclesiastical matters.

Can this kind of tyranny ever be tolerated in America, when it has been cast off in Italy, where it originated? I am not alone. Good old Catholic Bishop Doyle said, "In case the Pope assumed the ground he is now taking, we shall oppose him by every means in our power, even by the exercise of our spiritual authority."

I am in correspondence with Dr. Von Dollenger of Germany. He voted against the Pope's infallibility in 1870, and writes me that it never would have passed with the clergy had they not been led astray by the class-books from which they took their ideas during their seminary education, since the proofs given in those books are for the most part false, distorted, and shockingly vile. The principal and favorite works of modern theological schools are, "The Moral Theology of St. Alphonso Liquori," the "Theology of the Jesuit Terrone," and especially the shameless works of Gury. More pernicious text books it would be hard to find, worse, if possible, than those that are hurtfully medicated to make criminals of children in certain church schools.

I will, when we meet, show you that Rome is Babylon, pictured plainly in the Sacred Writings. Of Rome it may be said, it covets universal dominion, secured by the Inquisition. And this in the centennial year of the overthrow of the Bastile in France.

Now, briefly, let me tell you a few points I have settled, showing that the church to which we belong

is a slavish copy of the Pagan power which it superceded.

Do you not remember, last winter, when we were reading the report of the speech of the ex-pastor of St. Stephen's church at the New York Academy of Music, he said, "It was a thousand pities, when the Pagan emperor, Constantine, was converted to Christianity, that he mingled church and state; that the pontiffs were made rich in worldly things and sought worldly power, which was not according to the Saviour's example, who became poor, and the apostle Peter, who said, 'Silver and gold have I none,'—counting it joy to bear the reproach of the Master?" Well, that started me on a line of investigation that has opened my eyes to the delusion in which we have lived. An author I am studying shows clearly that the Madonna of Rome is just like the Madonna of Babylon. The features and complexion of the two are the same. Until recently there was nothing either Jewish or Italian in the Madonna of Rome. The idea of worshipping a mother and child was borrowed from the pagan worship of old Babylon, started by Semiramis, which system has helped shape the heathenism of the entire world. Hislop says, further, "Our Jesuit missionaries were astonished to find the counterpart of the Madonna and her Child as devoutly worshipped in Thibet, China and Japan, as in Rome itself."

There were monks and nuns in ancient Babylon. Monasteries are to be found in Thibet and Japan.

After Constantine was converted to Christianity, there was a mingling of its doctrines with paganism; the Roman church put the Virgin Mary and the child Jesus in the place of Semiramis and her son, thus gaining popularity with the pagans. As paganism disappeared externally, in the very same proportion it was absorbed and became the inspiring power of the

papacy. I am astonished, confounded, humbled, at these revelations.

Baalti was the Babylonian for "my lady," — the Latin is *Mea Domina*, which is corrupted in Italian into "Madonna."

I find that the confessional, purgatory, celibacy, and, indeed, every thing that makes Romanism what it is, have been borrowed from old idolatries — counterfeit religions. I have been detained in making these investigations; besides, as the great occasion of the Pope's emptying purgatory, in honor of his Jubilee, was coming off, I determined to remain and see the performance. I had some weeks before finished all my business with the Pope, or, with my recently changed views, I know not how I could have asked his license to marry, or to issue the New Testament.

I am more and more shocked at the Pope's dreadful and growing presumption. In the light of God's holy Word how blasphemous his conduct! Soon after his Jubilee, I am told that he canonized a good many new saints to please those who made him the richest presents. My missionary friend informs me, "To many towns and cities that had contributed liberally to his Jubilee he gave a new idol, by taking an individual of their choice whom they said once lived there, and making a patron saint to whom they could pray in times of trouble. To add to their faith in the new saint he offered the first prayer as he turned him over to those for whom he was designed." Was there ever a greater imposition, or such foolish credulity?

It does really seem as if Leo XIII. was left to do weak and presumptuous things. His canonization of saints, impious and blasphemous as it was, did not suffice. He must show his supposed infallible power anew; so he essayed to do what no finite being can

do, free souls from purgatory, and pose as an infinite being. This occurred last Sunday, 30th inst. Notice had been sent over the world that on that day he would offer a propitiatory sacrifice, which would cleanse the myriad of souls in purgatory, suffering for their sins. All the faithful of every church were directed to pray for the dead at the same time, for which service the Pope would grant them plenary indulgence. It seems that while triumphing in his Jubilee, he could not be happy unless he released the millions of his children who were wailing in the abyss. The clergy taught that his divinity gloriously shone forth in this act, and that it was a deed of unheard-of clemency. Why, in the name of mercy, if he had the power, did n't he do it before?

Leo was to bestow a special blessing on all those who would visit the eternal city, and assist his holiness on this occasion, and the poor deluded devotees crowded into Rome, thousands of tickets having been issued to the faithful, to secure sitting or standing room in St. Peter's cathedral. Many Romanists themselves thought the imposition supremely ridiculous, a great trick to beguile the superstitious, for there are multitudes of men capable of reasoning in Rome, and, as is well known, the ruling power is down on that gigantic lie of the centuries, the Papacy. The cathedral is six hundred and thirty-two feet in length; greatest width four hundred and forty-six feet; height, four hundred and forty-eight feet. It is doubtless the most magnificent religious edifice ever built, and has from the first been a temple of idolatry, mainly built by money gathered from indulgences granted in the time of the monk Tetzal.

The Pope was to commence the services at nine o'clock, in the morning. I secured a place by the high altar, in the centre of the church. The canopy covering this altar, under the center of the dome, is of

bronze, supported by four spiral composite columns, rich with foliage of gilt, and is ninety-five feet high to top of the globe.

I had some two hours to wait, with a missionary friend, Rev. Wm. Van Meter, who joined me. We had camp-stools and filled the time in reading what Daniel, Paul, and John say of the beast, the man of sin, and the woman, as we sat there under Rome's high altar of idolatry.

The priests had commenced saying masses for the dead a half-hour before we arrived, and kept on saying them for the space of two hours, — till half-past eight. The church says that St. Peter was buried under the high altar where we were. Reliable authorities consider this legendary, and doubt if he ever visited Rome. Nevertheless, on the right of the altar his image sits in his chair, that is to say, the old statue of Jupiter, which was in the pagan Pantheon, is revamped and called St. Peter, the first Pope. The altar was covered with cloth of gold and purple, and lighted with one hundred and twelve immense yellow wax candles in silver candelabra of elaborate workmanship. Galleries of seats were arranged on each side of the high altar, for bishops, archbishops, cardinals, and distinguished individuals.

The Pope, as the clock struck nine, was borne in, sitting in his chair, on the shoulders of dignitaries. They carried him into the Chapel of the Sacrament, where they assert the body of Christ, in the form of bread and wine, is always present. What a shocking perversion to claim that He is present in these elements, when they were instituted at the Last Supper, to be partaken of by His disciples as a memorial of His death and absence until He comes. If He has come, or is present, they fail of significance. But Rome will persist in making an idol of the bread.

The Pope, after praying, was gorgeously arrayed, placed again in his chair of state, and borne on as before, smiling and scattering blessings, till he reached the high altar, when he was let down and clad in priestly robes, and with the help of three of his men went up the steps to pray. The mass of sufferers, it was understood, had commenced to move out of the regions of anguish. But a further performance was necessary, the huge host had only started. The Pope came down and put on his ordinary garments, and had his chaplain say a prayer, when we are to suppose that the procession moved on,—although previous to this most absurd performance, very loose ideas were held in the church, some supposing that souls must be in the purifying fires till the judgment day.

Again he put on his pontifical robes, over which his assistants placed a bright mantle, and then was seated on a throne in front of the altar of confession.

There, as God's Vicegerent, claiming the right to loose or bind in heaven, earth and hell, he pompously pronounced the absolution for those in torment. Then, if we may believe him, purgatory at once was evacuated of its wailing hosts, and millions changed groans for songs, and rose to heaven. The Pope claims that he accomplished this at that moment. But where is the proof? Let him show that even one soul ever gained heaven by his fiat!

I was simply stupefied with astonishment at this heaven-daring presumption. Considering the enlightened age in which we live, it is one of the most blasphemous deeds ever performed, always excepting the mass, and most surely portends sudden retribution.

I said to myself, as I looked on this sinful vision of pride, Is it possible that the credulity of the masses will accept the falsehood? Many present had friends

whom they had been taught were in purgatory ; they were glad to hear that they were released, and that no more money would be claimed, and I saw some among them laughing and joking, when on their way home, as if returning from anything but a religious ceremony.

Will there not be a terrible revulsion when the thought occurs, as it surely will, If it rests with the Pope to release from suffering, why did he wait so long? Was it not simply for the money the friends of the lost were paying? Will not the mass of Romanists lose faith in him more and more, and hate him as the people of Italy do? Will not the clergy complain that their pay, which comes from saying masses for departed souls, is cut off? When will purgatory be sufficiently filled, to bring back the needed income for the prosperity of the church? Will not this exit from the prison-house of after-death-penance, make the money charges much higher for those who are from time to time consigned there?

Oh, my Clarissima, I see it clearly now ; the doctrines of devils have beguiled us. We have been far astray; the dogma of purgatory is purely pagan. I had much to learn when we talked it over. "Paganism leaves hope after death for sinners, by means of the punishment of purgatorial pains." I find that this was taught in Greece, Pagan Rome, Egypt, Tartary and India. It is carrying out the principle embodied in the blazing and purifying Baal fires.

But I fear I shall weary your patience, and I must close, wishing you could be here and we could talk face to face, for my heart is overflowing with the strange revelations of the mixture of Christianity and Paganism everywhere found in the apostacy.

You have heard of the great exposition at Paris, now in this centennial year of the down-fall of the Bastile prison, which was used as an inquisition when

Rome ruled France. Among the wonders of the picture gallery under new France are vivid reproductions, on canvas, of the scenes of horror practiced by the Inquisition on those who dared confess Christ. I shall stop a day in Paris on my way home. God is unveiling the corruption of Rome as never before.

I hear the Lord of heaven and earth saying, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her plagues." I shall hasten home, take you to my heart and under my protection, and we will strive, in the strength which God giveth, to help others into the path of life.

Now, dearest, if you are in doubt and do not understand me, calmly trust in God till I come and make it plain; and may He keep you under the shadow of His wings, and "bring us fully out from the power of darkness and translate us into the kingdom of His dear Son."

Yours ever,

BERLIN.

When the lady Clarissima received this letter, she was almost overwhelmed with conflicting emotions; and although she could "not clearly see things so changed about," and needed to read and re-read it carefully, pondering its strong passages, yet she finally settled her mind in comparative quietness, saying to herself, "It will come out right, for his lordship is always clear-headed, and never makes mistakes."

XIX.

Taking the Census at Madonna Hall.

A SHORT time after the events of the last chapter, Madonna Hall received a remarkable visit. It happened that the Lady Clarissima, in citizen's dress, had joined Madame Du Pont and gone to the beach for the day, and the ecclesiastics residing in the vicinity were feasting at Father Buhler's house, in the city, as they must have a convivial time at least once a week.

Soon after noon, a carriage drawn by Senator Southbury's new span passed through the park entrance, along the serpentine driveway, and stopped at the coach-ring in front of the establishment. Trees, shrubs, flowers and fountains were rejoicing, oblivious of sin and sorrow. Fragrant sprays nodded familiarly from trellis and shrubbery, and a choice variety of bloom smiled a welcome from many a *parterre*. The inmates of the carriage admired the rare beauty that met the eye, and yet their enjoyment was alloyed by the thought that they were

to make an official call which might be unpleasant for some of those interviewed.

The fact was, the hitherto careless majority of loyal citizens had waked up to take means to save their country by exposing its invaders. Among other causes of complaint, a loud and earnest protest had been made. A host of true-hearted Americans had petitioned Congress for laws to protect helpless women immured in convents.

Colonel Southbury was one of the most active of the committee of one hundred in effecting the passage of this law. This he could the more easily do as he was in the Senate, and was both influential and eloquent. It was simply to guide a popular uprising, to stand by the Constitution and the liberties of the country.

A law had been framed that every nunnery in the land should be visited by four commissioners, two gentlemen and two ladies, to ascertain the state of the nuns. They were instructed to be patient and take plenty of time, and do the work thoroughly.

In taking the census, the real name, age, parentage, and place of birth were to be ascertained, and each nun was to be asked if she wished to be free. Parents bereft of daughters, hidden under assumed names, could thus learn where they were, and nuns longing for freedom could be released.

Colonel Southbury and his chosen assistants, Rev. Augustus Cameron, Mrs. Leavenworth and Grace,

alighted, and leaving the horses in care of the out-rider, made their way over the three sets of terraces, and reaching the front entrance, rang the bell.

A demure-looking nun, in costume of the Middle Ages, opened the door.

"Is the Mother Superior in?" asked Colonel Southbury.

"She is away for the day," was the reply. "Will you come in?"

The nun, Sister Sophia, supposing that the callers were rich patrons of the academical department, ushered them into the parlor.

"What can I do for you?" asked she, politely.

"My errand is with the nuns of this place," said the Colonel. "What number have you here?"

Now Sister Sophia had been trained not to answer irrelevant questions. But she was dazed, and supposing that she was to officiate in the Superioress's place, replied, quite off her guard, —

"We have a house full now, in all two hundred. It is vacation time; the one hundred scholars have gone home, and their places are filled with nuns from other nunneries. It is a retreat for them in summer."

"For how long a time is this?"

"Only from June to September," was the reply.

"Ah, yes, I see," replied Colonel Southbury. "We will now call in the nuns. Ring the great bell for the Madonna Sisterhood, and we will take the census."

What he meant by census, the nun portress did not know, but still looking on him as a Romanist, a friend of the nunnery, whom the Superioress expected, who was to be shown every attention, and unaccustomed to question when bidden, she rang the bell, and the nuns hastening down from all the stories crowded into the reception parlor, where Colonel Southbury, with Mr. Cameron and the ladies, begged them to be seated, and with a few words of welcome put them at their ease.

Each of the visitors was provided with a pencil and note-book, and selecting a row of sisters, asked of each her name, age, parentage, former place of residence, and, lastly, if she was content to stay in the nunnery, telling her, if not, she could this day have leave to depart, as a home and kind friends awaited her outside, and as the law of the land was her protector.

It was found that there was a general dread of giving the former name ; it was looked upon as being false to their vows. But finally each one was persuaded to do so. Some were too frightened to give much account of themselves ; others were only too willing, and answering, said they were longing to get away ; others still were seemingly angry that these questions should be asked, and said that if the Superioress and officiating priest were present they would not be allowed.

But there came an interruption. The door-bell

was violently rung, and a gentleman admitted to the hall, was heard to say,—

“I wish to see the lady of the house. I am looking for my daughter, who I suppose is hidden here under a new name.”

“I know nothing about your daughter,” protested the porteress. “The Lady Superior is away.”

“But to-day the census is to be taken, and the real name of each nun will be given.”

“I know nothing about it,” said the nun, stolidly.

By this time another anxious father, and two frantic mothers, had pressed into the open door-way, each asking piteously for a lost child.

Mr. Cameron, hearing the noise, stepped into the hall and learned the case. Glancing out the door, he saw an array of pilgrims in carriages, and pilgrims on foot, hurrying towards the mansion, evidently on the same heart-thrilling errand.

“Dear friends,” said he, with misty eyes, to those in the hall, “we are taking the census, and shall, in a short time, know the real name, parentage, and former residence of every inmate of this institution. We can then answer your inquiries. The Lady Superior and the Bishop are absent, which I greatly regret, as they are fully in sympathy with this movement of the Government to do away with a great wrong.”

Then turning to the porteress, he said,—

“Will you give these friends seats in the academy hall for awhile.”

She silently obeyed, and as soon as the space by the hall door was cleared, another company of stricken seekers for long-mourned daughters presented themselves, and implored the young clergyman to help them in their extremity of searching.

There were gray-haired men and women, with hair prematurely blanched from sorrow. Eyes once bright and piercing had become faded and dim with weeping. All the while their loved ones had been lost they had kept vigil, constantly praying the God of heaven to guide them in their search, but until the law was made, no nunnery would reveal the true name; when once a nun had taken the fatal veil, her existence, so far as the outside world was concerned, was enveloped in the silence and mystery of death.

A few months ago a young lady was foully murdered in an eastern city, and two hundred parents, from different parts of the state, came to the place where the body was kept, each hoping, fearing, to identify a lost daughter. Doubtless, some of the same two hundred were at Madonna Hall on this day. The school-room was crowded, and other apartments were needed to accommodate the crowd. It was a Charley Ross search a hundred-fold multiplied. The interest was intense, overwhelming. The long pent-up sorrow and grief were culminating in suspense too oppressive to be borne. Some of the feeble mothers fainted, and were carried out on the verandah. Mr. Cameron kindly had them cared for, and received the

new-comers, — as many questions were asked by group after group, as they arrived. He finally returned to the parlor where the record was being taken. Meanwhile some of those waiting found their way over the park-like grounds, and, as the shrines and idols were discovered, many were the exclamations of surprise and astonishment that any in this land of gospel light could be so unbelieving and superstitious as to worship the creature rather than the Creator. What a revelation! The rankest idolatry in a professing church, in the midst of Christendom. The fathers and mothers who were grieving for their daughters felt an added burden in sighing and crying for the abominations permitted in the land.

As Mr. Cameron resumed his place in taking the census, several sisters were heard to find fault with the proceedings, when Colonel Southbury replied, in his kindest way,—

“Ladies, do not fear. We are your friends. We are simply obeying the laws of the United States.”

“Every nun in the land can be free if she wishes,” said Grace, in clear ringing tones.

“It is against the laws for you to be confined here without your full choice,” added Mr. Cameron.

“We only owe allegiance to Rome,” was the answer from an old nun, too set to be set at liberty, and who had found an asylum in this country, when nunneries were visited by Government agents in Europe.

"If you only owe allegiance to Rome, you should go there by all means," replied Colonel Southbury.

"I'd rather stay here," she answered.

"Very well, then ; you can do so, if you will obey our laws. But this country has decided not to entertain enemies any longer, unless she has them either under lock and key, or under the watchful eye of her officials."

"Praise God," said an old nun. "I've been praying for this for many years."

"It is too good to be true," said another.

"Can the Government of the United States make the priests obey?" asked a young, pallid sister, tremblingly. "I thought they were only bound to obey the Pope."

"Why should they not obey our Government according to their vows, and forego the Italian Pope, who is himself only a private citizen?" asked Colonel Southbury. "Your name, Miss?" he went on, addressing the next, while Grace, with her rare tact, sunny face, and genial ways, was winning favor and taking names, her mother and Mr. Cameron showing by their long list that they were not far behind.

When, at length, the one hundred who composed the sisterhood were taken, they left for their rooms, and the next one hundred, the guest nuns, were rung down. These last being simply there during vacation.

Father Williams arrived, but deemed it unwise to

interfere, although the new order of things filled him with surprise and perplexity.

The same process of inquiry had similar results.

“What does all this mean?” exclaimed a strong-willed, hard-featured nun. “You’ll suffer for this, when the Archbishop arrives.”

“The Archbishop is only a servant under the United States laws,” was the reply of Mr. Cameron, “and if he disobeys, he will suffer imprisonment, or be banished.”

This was a new thought, and caused a murmur of wonder among the nuns. Could it be that the Archbishop was less to be feared than the Government of the land?

“You have no right to question us, and we have no right to answer, or even listen,” said one to Grace.

“But the law requires this, and you must obey, or take the consequences.”

“It is a mortal sin for us to converse with strangers,” said another, crossing herself and mumbling prayers.

When the question was put, “Are you contented?” there was so much abject fear that not one in ten dare honestly tell that she was sick of her life, and that she had been disappointed and shocked when she first learned its character.

One, when asked the question, “Are you contented?” broke down and cried, “O my Mother! take me to my mother.” At this, others showed

more courage, and deep down in their hearts there was still burning the love of kindred, and the old home, and finally when the census was completed, it was found that twenty-five out of the two hundred ventured to say they were longing to be free. But this was not all. With the long list of real names Mr. Caméron stationed himself in the hall, and calling the waiting crowd to order, slowly and distinctly read every name. Five parents responded, and their daughters were restored to them with tears of joy.

These were all found among those that said they wished to be free. The recovery of these daughters was to the parents like life from the dead, and the rejoicing was overwhelmingly touching. It was the mighty surging of a sea of mingled joy and grief, as there were many fathers and mothers witnessing it who were still bereft of those dearer to them than life; and they left with almost hopeless hearts to continue the search, as other mysterious nunneries were by law laid open to the light of day.

As the sad ones left, the fortunate parents were rejoicing, and there were heart-felt praises to God, and hand-shakings and congratulations. In the midst of this wave of happiness, as they left Madonna Hall, who should appear but the Lady Clarissima, and her sister, Madame Du Pont. Quickly learning the state of affairs, they entered into the general gladness with immense enthusiasm, the Lady Superior fairly clapping her hands for joy.

“God is in this movement,” she said. “It is the beginning of better things.”

“Well, upon my word!” exclaimed Madame Du Pont, “this is getting changed around. I am simply delighted! I always did hate mystery, and a walled-in convent, as I have often told you, sister.”

“Yes, I remember,” replied the Superioress, brightly. “Now, dear friends,” said she, to Colonel Southbury, Mr. Cameron, and the Leavenworths, “I can not thank you enough for myself and the Bishop. I received a letter from his lordship a few days ago which has stirred my soul in the right direction. I wish all the sisters to know that I fully approve of what you have done, according to the new laws, which should long since have been made.”

Then conferring with the Commissioners, it was decided to order a barge and at once fit off those that wished to leave. They were to have rooms at the Y. W. C. A. until they could find situations, or be received into their old homes. Meanwhile they would be where they could still learn of Christ and the way of salvation only through Him.

In due time the twenty nuns were ready, and at request of Lady Clarissima, Rev. Mr. Cameron held a short service of prayer, committing them to the keeping of the Great Shepherd, and asking for His special blessing.

They each embraced the Lady Clarissima, saying that they were sorry to leave her, although heart-sick

of convent life. All eyes watched the well-loaded barge as it wound out of the grounds, and many a blessing was invoked on the retiring nuns.

Madame Du Pont had meanwhile taken Father Williams under her care, and was very busily seeking to reconcile him to the new order of things.

"See here, Father," said she, in her persuasive way, "we must accept the inevitable. The Pope has long since lost his political power, and Signor Crispi, the Italian Premier, who knows all about it, says he will never get it again."

"No doubt that he is right. His temporal power is of the past. I am sorry to say he is a criminal, indicted before the nations!" said Father Williams.

"That means," said the shrewd little lady, "that the church is losing ground. That means that the people of Italy, who should know him best, and who really hate him most, having set the example, all the Catholic world will shortly follow suit, and do as the Italians do!"

"Madame, I think you have hit the nail on the head. It is only a question of time!" replied Father Williams, strangely well-pleased, for he had long mourned over the iniquity covered up in the system.

"Well, then, we must see," said Madame, "that there will be great changes everywhere in the Catholic ranks. Contempt for the weak, but would-be powerful Pope is getting to be more and more common. The Government here is waking up to see

things as they are, and to enforce laws to regulate and do away with Jesuit manœuvres and oppressive institutions."

"But this is all so sudden," said the Father; "I am scarcely prepared for it. I tremble, while I hope for better things."

"I do not wonder in the least," replied the sympathizing widow. "I was taken quite by surprise when Clarissima read me the Bishop's last letter from Rome. I wish you could see it, too. It is very remarkable how he has been guided. I think, as my sister does, that the hand of God is leading him; then, you know, he will come out all right."

"Certainly; and I would not be afraid to follow where Bishop Berlin leads," said Father Williams, with enthusiasm. "He is a true man and conscientious."

"I am glad you think so, for, do you know, my sister just worships him." Then, confidentially, behind her fan, "Did it ever occur to you what the special errand of the Bishop is, in going post haste to Rome?"

"I am not aware what his errand is," was the reply.

"Well, as you are his most intimate friend, he doubtless would have told you, if he had had the opportunity."

"He doubtless would," was the reply of the perplexed Father. "We are accustomed to confide our plans to each other."

“Of course,” said Madame, “and you surely ought to know this, which Clarissima has told me as a great secret. The Bishop is in Rome to get a dispensation to marry her! What do you think of that?”

The Father gasped almost spasmodically, caught his breath, and said, “I am too surprised to have any clear ideas!”

“There is nothing wicked about it, is there?” asked she, coloring. “What ’s the harm?”

“It is a great step,” was the reply; “but I have long felt that the clergy ought to have leave to marry, if they wish.”

“That is because you are a wise man, and very clear-headed,” exclaimed the lady, admiringly.

The Father fairly blushed, he was so pleased.

“I wish to ask,” said he, “if the Pope gave him leave?”

“Oh, yes, he gave him leave, and his blessing as well. The Bishop plunged into the Tiber years ago, you remember, and saved a Cardinal from drowning, and is much thought of at Rome.”

“Well, well; this is news, indeed!” exclaimed the Father.

“I thought you, of all others, ought to know it,” pursued the lady, “since you are the bosom friend of the Bishop. But the joke of it is, I always objected to a convent life because it broke up home and family plans, and have often pointed to Clarissima as a forlorn specimen of an old maid, although she is not yet

thirty, and here, all at once, she steals a march on me, and is shortly to become a bride! It makes me feel my loneliness afresh!" and with this pathetic speech the tears actually came in her bright eyes, and impressed the Father that she was a very lovely and captivating woman, and, of course, the conversation waxed more and more interesting.

Evening drew on, and tea was served, after which Hosea harnessed the horses to take Madame Du Pont to her quarters in the city. She politely asked Father Williams to take a seat in the carriage, and how it came about we cannot tell, but before the evening conversation was over they were pledged to become united as soon as the way was opened.

The clergy who dined with Father Buhler did not return to their monastic dwelling until late at night, and knew nothing of the census taking and its consequences until the next day.

"A nice state of things, truly!" said Father Krafts, when he heard the news.

"I'd like to know," said Father Pecci, "what right the Government has to search out and parade all our affairs!"

"So audacious!" was Archbishop Bland's exclamation.

"It is these indomitable, irrepressible Yankees," said Father Krafts; "they make the poorest papists in the world. They will think for themselves, and that's against all rule in our church."

“If it comes to this, that we, as Jesuits, cannot rule here, we must try it elsewhere,” said the prelate; “but I am far from giving up the game. We shall doubtless win yet. These Americans are a careless money-loving race, and we have the advantage in being wily and ever on the alert. They are no match for our holy intrigues. We have abundant means, and have found out that many editors, lawyers and politicians can be bribed, with large sums of money, to do our bidding.”

XX.

Hastening a Decision.

STILLING tried in vain to get an opportunity to converse with Grace at Mrs. Byington's Soiree. Although apparently pleased with his courteous address, she carefully avoided seeing him alone; feeling intuitively that he had something to say to her that she would be pained to hear, she made herself busy helping her aunt and cousin receive and entertain the company. In his unfailing complacency, the German lover did not suspect the true state of the case, but imagined that she indulged in a certain complimentary coyness arising from her deep regard for him, as she was at ease in general society. With this solace to his slightly disturbed feelings, on retiring for the night in his hotel quarters, he slept more soundly than ever, resolving with his first waking thoughts to devote the day to Miss Leavenworth, plead his cause, effect an engagement, and as soon as possible bring about a union.

Accordingly, at the earliest allowable hour, with his fine equipage, which was bought with his chil

dren's money, drawn up before the door, he called on Miss Grace with the air of a prince imperial, and proposed an excursion. At first she commenced excusing herself, but her aunt, coming in at the moment, prevailed on her to go, saying the change would do her good. Stilling gracefully handed the young lady into the cabriolet, and the driver starting up the horses, they were borne rapidly away from the city's din, into the charmingly diversified suburbs, and as the wheels quietly rolled over the smooth road there was ample opportunity for conversation. As Grace was most becomingly dressed, Stilling began by an approving remark indicating his full appreciation of her rare taste. Although she did not show that she was offended by his carefully chosen words, she skilfully turned the current by calling attention to a common topic of the day. He was at once interested, and sought to take views akin to hers that he might fully ingratiate himself in her favor. After discoursing on city news, in a very sensible way, which she appeared to enjoy, he said,—

“I recently saw a striking statement which must, I think, awaken interest among the thoughtful.” Posing as a religious man, he related a religious item. “It is said that during the last one hundred years of missionary effort, some three million of converts have been made, while in the same time the heathen population has increased two hundred million. Now, Miss Grace, I learn that you are skilled in mathematics,

how long would it take to convert the world at that rate?"

"I should say that it would never be converted at that rate," was her ready reply; "with means sufficient, however, it might be evangelized. We know that 'this Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness to all nations.'"

"I doubt not that you are right; you always are, Miss Grace; but for myself, as on many other religious questions, I am at sea without a chart. Oh, that you would consent to be my guide," and he looked volumes of meaning, which Grace appeared not to notice.

While intently studying her face, he said, "I saw this fact also among the current notes: 'The Pope of Rome and the Sultan of Turkey are the two chief prisoners of Europe; the Pope in the Vatican, and the Sultan in his Kiosk.' What does this indicate?"

"The religious press says, it shows the loss of power of the systems they represent," replied Grace.

"Of course; you've hit it exactly, Miss Grace," was the reply, with a beaming face. "And what is very striking, I find that many distinguished people think so too, in regard to Romanism. You remember that Ireland is the only country over which Leo XIII. has political dominion, and he clings to this last vestige of secular power as the drowning man does to

a straw, and with about as much avail," laughed Stilling.

"I suppose so," she replied with more animation. "Do you think that Ireland will gain her freedom?"

"It looks like it; they are so terribly in earnest. Protestants have won confidence by showing themselves true friends. The chief leader has a good following among the Catholics as well as Protestants. The Pope has for years sent his mandates to Ireland only to have them contemptuously set aside by the people. Miss Grace, how passing strange it is that he can not learn wisdom, and cease to command where he is sure to be disobeyed."

"Do the Irish thus dare to defy him?" she asked.

"Indeed they do. For some years they have declared that they will hold their country against Rome. She may give them religion, but not politics."

"I am glad to know it," replied Grace, pleased to have a conversation in which she could gain information. "I have been puzzled to find just the state of Irish home affairs from the papers."

She was off her guard, and the Count, fully cognizant of the fact, and eager to take advantage, adroitly led the conversation to personal matters. He commended her aunt and her reception, ending by saying,—

"Do you know, Miss Grace, that I met with a great draw-back in my enjoyment yesterday?"

“Indeed, what could it be? I am sure aunt was anxious to have you enjoy yourself.”

“The fault was not with her, Miss Grace. I longed for a confidential talk with you, and was almost distracted that I could not gain it.” Then abruptly, “I had it in my heart to ask if you would become mine.”

Grace blushed scarlet, but was silent. She knew not what to say, yet there were confused questionings in her mind, if only she could utter them. What added to her embarrassment, Stilling continued to regard her with intense eyes, and at length said,—

“Miss Grace, you have a strange power over me. You move and influence me as I was never moved and influenced before. You are interwoven in my every thought, in every fibre of my being. I try to talk on general subjects, but you see how miserably I fail. It is of you, and you only, that I can think. Will you not intrust your happiness to me?”

Grace was disconcerted still more, and strangely could not summon voice to reply. Stilling, taking much for granted, and making a favorable interpretation of her blushing silence, diverged upon the eloquent theme of his adventures and travels. He was a very hero, and so many thrilling incidents attended him, that Grace, despite her conservative resolutions, woman-like, was for the time captivated, and wondered at her previous lack of faith in him. No man devoid of heart and principle could woo with

more assurance than he, and yet after awhile it occurred to him, that she did not respond as he wished, but maintained an ominous silence, a fact which he would have discovered earlier had he not been so much taken up with rehearsing events of his remarkable career.

“You are silent, Miss Grace. Why this reserve?” as anew it came over him that he was not fully influencing her as was his purpose.

On the other hand, Grace, calling to mind her determination before starting, felt that she must arouse herself, or she would yield too much to his powerful presence, and with a great effort at self-possession she said,—

“I wish to waive this matter for the present, sir. It is so sudden; and we are as yet comparatively strangers.”

Stilling was thunder-struck, but quickly recovering himself, said,—

“It shall be as you wish.”

After a few moments' silence, he continued in a gentle, dignified way,—

“Let me read you a few lines from a letter your honored father wrote me on this subject. He says,—

“In reply to your earnest request for the hand of my precious daughter, I refer you to her. On your gaining her consent, I give her to you as a sacred charge, feeling that you are worthy of her, and that I shall be proud to claim you as my son.”

He then plead his case, as no other could, and with his plausible tongue and magnetic eye was finally irresistible; especially because he was her father's choice, Grace was moved to accept him. She reluctantly smothered an old affection with the thought that it was her duty to learn to love the Count, and, as if under a magician's wand for the moment, she forgot her doubts and fears, and there glistened on her finger a costly engagement ring.

The Count was jubilant at his success, while Grace was shortly beset with former forebodings. She had strangely forgotten to speak of the note which had been sent to warn her, and now dared not allude to it, but resolved to see her father and mother immediately, and show them the letter, and find out what it could mean, by thorough investigation.

Meanwhile, Stilling was so deeply absorbed with his ambitious thoughts that he did not heed her lack of joy and air of depression. It was a grand occasion with him. He decided that he would make the engagement short, and precipitate the bridal day. As at the close of the eventful excursion, he returned Grace to Byington Mansion, and took affectionate leave, there was trembling on one side, exultation on the other.

Paul, as in duty bound, resolving to offset the Count's influence, sought an interview with Miss Leavenworth. Instead of calling at the house, however, he lingered near the conservatory, admiring the

plants. It was the day after the excursion, and he had not long to wait, for Grace, being a florist as well as a botanist, was fond of helping in the care of the flowers. She had entered the greenhouse, and was training a plant, when Paul suddenly stood beside her, saying,—

“May I speak a word with you, lady?”

“Certainly. What can I do for you?” asked Grace, kindly.

“I would do you a good turn, lady,” was the reply.

“Thank you,” said Grace, cheerily. “What can you do? Are you a gardener?”

“I am not,” he replied. “Please speak low, lady; there may be treacherous ears listening,” looking around cautiously. “If you can keep a secret that concerns your happiness, I’ll tell you one.”

“I’ll try my best,” returned Grace, with a bright smile, her curiosity rising. “It is worth trying for, if it has to do with my happiness. I hope I am in no danger at present.”

“Indeed, I am sorry to say that you are,” replied Paul, earnestly. “I will trust to your honor, for you have a sensible look. I wrote you the letter of warning.”

“You!” exclaimed Grace. “You wrote that letter? What right had you to interfere with my affairs? How dared you do such a thing?”

“If you will be so kind as to wait and hear me,”

replied he, unabashed, "you will understand. I was in the confidence of the stranger, Stilling, that is seeking to marry you. I was his serving-man for a year, and know him through and through. He is a faithless man, and you 'll do well to have no dealings with him."

Grace trembled from head to foot, and leaned against a pillar for support.

"Do you mean to say that he is not what he seems to be?"

"I do, and I can prove it," was the reply.

"How can I know that you tell me the truth?"

"You must be your own judge. I am doing self-denying work for his children, and if I served myself, as he does, you 'd have reason to distrust me."

"What children do you deny yourself for?" asked Grace, in a dazed way, dreading, yet anxious, to hear what he had to say.

"They belong to this fine man who calls himself a Count," was the reply.

"Has the Count children?" asked she, a deathly pallor on her face.

"He has two very sweet children."

"Two children? Impossible! I was told that he had never married. Where are they? I must see them."

"Come with me, and you shall see them," replied Paul.

"There must be some mistake," faltered Grace, staggering under the weight of the tidings.

Just then a huge shadow, and a stealthy tread, neared the house of flowers, and Grace, knowing who it was, motioned the dwarf to withdraw behind the partition, which he had barely time to do, when Stilling made his appearance.

“Ah, it is here that my beauteous queen hides herself,” he said, in blandest tones. “But why so pale, my dear Grace? Are you ill?”

She acknowledged that she was faint, and giving her his arm, he silently assisted her to the house. With keen intuition, suspecting the truth, he abruptly put her in charge of her aunt. The full conviction that her indisposition was caused by some new distrust of him, led him to punish her by excusing himself, saying that he had an engagement with a friend. He left in bad humor, for, when crossed, he had the temper of a fiend. He passed rapidly down the street, full of ill-will towards Grace, for the fancied slight of further lack of confidence, when, as he supposed, he had completely settled her mind as to his worthiness. He was revengefully angry, and although he had no idea of relinquishing Grace and her fortune, if, by a summary punishment, he could have forever made her incapable of doubting him, he would have done it. That she was disposed to criticise him, was a bitterness most obnoxious. When once she was his, he would teach her that it would not be endured.

XXI.

Nuptials and a Blushing Church.

AFTER the census, matters at Madonna Hall became settled in an improved condition. Bishop Berlin returned, having accomplished his mission, which was to obtain leave to marry the Lady Clarissima. The joyful event of the wedding occurred soon after his arrival, and was informal, being in place of one of the musical receptions in the convent parlors. The bishop had previously given the clergy residing near an inkling of his views on the subject of matrimony, to guard against too great a shock to their prejudices in his new departure.

Lady Clarissima, under the direction of Madame Du Pont, was arrayed in white, as were the sisterhood, and even Madame herself. The bride wore a crown of orange blossoms and a white veil. The guests declared that she looked too lovely for anything on earth. The new music teacher played the wedding march, and then the bishop with Lady Clarissima stood under an arch of roses; Madame Du Pont

and Father Williams were beside them, while Father Williams performed the ceremony.

The occasion passed off as naturally as possible, the bishop and his bride looking radiant with happiness as they received congratulations.

Father Buhler, of course, was at first scandalized at this innovation, calling it "a sin against conscience." But he was accustomed to call darkness "light," and light "darkness." Archbishop Bland said the marriage of the clergy was of the devil, and refused to be present. Indeed, so important an event as the wedding of the bishop could not occur without criticism and opposition.

The bishop realized this, and at the proper moment, calling the attention of the company assembled, said,—

"When I was ordained a priest, I made a solemn oath that I would never marry. Some of you wonder that I am led to break my vow, and ask if my own conscience does not condemn me for setting it aside. I wish, my friends, to say a word about vows. You know the Bible story of the daughter of Herodias dancing before Herod, and the rash oath he made that he would give her what she asked, to the half of his kingdom. She asked the head of John the Baptist. Now, was it right for Herod to keep that vow?"

"Of course not," replied Father Williams; "he committed a greater sin by keeping it than he did in

making it. An oath against the laws of God must not be kept."

"But, my Lord Bishop," said Father Krafts, "that cannot be said of the holy oath of celibacy, most surely."

"Ah, yes it can," was the reply of the bishop. "In the first place, it is not a holy, but a most unholy vow. It is against God's sacred provision for the welfare of the race; it crushes out the holy family affections, and disobeys the first command of our Creator: 'It is not good for man to be alone; let us make him a helpmeet like unto himself.' Has God ever annulled this mandate?"

"I think not, my Lord Bishop," replied Father Williams; "but the church has."

"Yes," rejoined the bishop. "Now let us see what the Saviour did about this law. He did not choose his apostles among unmarried men; they lived with their wives when at home, and they sometimes went with them and labored abroad. Our Lord was entertained at the home of Peter, and healed his wife's mother of a fever. He gave the beloved John a charge, and he took His mother Mary to his home."

"Yes, yes; He looked out for His mother," said Father Pecci, "because she was the blessed Virgin."

"Now listen to the words of Paul," the bishop continued. "He says, 'Have we not power to eat and drink? Have we not the power to lead about a

believing wife as well as the other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?' If these teachings are disregarded, untold evils will result. Every thoughtful man among us has often asked, What is the remedy for the besetting sin of the clergy? We read it in the Bible, 'To avoid fornication, let every man have his wife, and let every woman have her husband.' Celibacy is the great cause of fornication, and marriage is the Bible antidote. All here present can witness to what I say, and the fearful corruption of the Church of Rome is a standing proof that the vow of celibacy is not of God, but of the prince of the power of the air, who worketh in the children of disobedience."

"I insist," said Father Buhler, excitedly, "it has always been a law of the infallible church that the priests should be celibate."

"Oh, no, my son," replied Bishop Berlin; "you are mistaken. You forget your history. All the church historians acknowledge that her priests were not required to be celibate for almost a thousand years. Even now, the clergy in Greece and Asia are permitted to marry. And when it was at first proposed at the Council of Nice that priests should be forbidden to marry, the proposition was rejected by an almost unanimous vote. It was a hard matter for the church to adopt that miserable decree, and I firmly believe that the Pope will be so beset with petitions to grant permission to marry, that he will, for the

sake of peace, give a general dispensation, and have no more trouble about it. He allows me to give this liberty to a certain number of priests, for a monied consideration."

The clergy present received this with surprised acclaim, and the way the nuns fell to blushing was beautiful to see.

"Well, now," outspoke Father Pecci—he was a small, nervous, man, and since he could not fill the post of cardinal, had been consigned to the priesthood,—“I don't see why Uncle Leo could not in this, his year of Jubilee, make another joyful celebration, and let us all marry."

A general laugh met this proposal of Father Pecci, who would be likely to wait some time before any woman would choose him.

"Well, why not?" cried Father Williams, coming to the rescue. "It is understood that the Pope has recently opened the gates of the nether-world purgatory, and sent millions of tormented souls to heaven, and why not keep on in his work of saving from suffering? We all know that our vows of celibacy are vows of humiliation and self-denial, most unnatural and crossing."

"I see that you brethren of the priesthood," said Bishop Berlin, "and you sisters, are mostly satisfied that I am right in breaking my vows of celibacy. I have not only the sanction of God's holy Word, but I have also the leave of the Pope, who claims that he can

annul and cancel every possible obligation arising from an oath. I acknowledge to you that this is the supreme moment of my life. I have long loved my Clarissima, but never allowed her to suspect the state of my heart, until I saw the way clear to ask the Pope's consent. What do you suppose emboldened me to venture to do such an unheard-of thing?"

No one could tell.

"Well, it was that shocking dispensation of the Pope, giving Amando the Duke of Aosta the right to marry his niece. I said, 'If the Pope can give this prince the right to sin, he can as well release me from the bondage of a sinful vow, and allow me to marry my Clarissima.'"

"Yes, yes, why not?" said Father Williams, and others.

"Now, brethren," continued the bishop, "do nothing disorderly, but when any of you are firmly persuaded in your minds that you wish to be united in holy bonds to the object of your choice, let me know, and I will see what I can do for you."

At this, Father Williams stepped forward beside Madame Du Pont, who was blushing like a young girl; clasping her hand, he said,—

"My lord Bishop, we are ready, and take you at your word."

The bans had been published, and the bishop had been beforehand instructed, and in turn read the marriage service and offered prayer. Then came the cus-

tomary congratulations, and anew the wedding march was played, and every face beamed with joy. No one there was more ready to welcome the new departure than the Pope's nephew, Father Pecci, and in connection with Father Williams, with whom he was accustomed to advise, he had as a toast, at the entertainment which soon after a caterer provided in the Academy hall,—

“Hurrah for Madonna Hall! the burial ground of the celibacy of the priesthood of Rome in America.”

This was received with enthusiasm, and in the hush which followed, the bishop reverently, with bowed head, said,—

“For this sacrament of marriage we do bless and praise Thee, Divine Redeemer. Thou didst condescend to attend the marriage at Cana of Galilee. Thou didst there begin Thy miracles, showing that Thou wast from heaven, and many believed. Wilt Thou grace this wedding-feast with Thy presence, and may these nuptials prove to be the beginning of miracles, which shall purge out the wicked leaven that has wrought such evil among Thy children.”

“I have been reading on this subject,” said Father Williams, breaking the impressive silence a few minutes later, “and find that marriage is honorable in all. This is Scripture, literally understood, according to the opinion of the fathers, as we are allowed to interpret. If it is thus honorable in all, why forbid it to

two hundred thousand priests, multitudes of whom would provide homes for as many joyless nuns?"

"That is well said," replied the bishop. "I shall insist on following up the matter, and the end will be good results."

Most of the nuns were possessed with a lively curiosity to know if the dispensation was to be general. It is true, some talked against it, from religious habit, and "could not be expected to turn at once," but it was a sensation of a new and healthy order in their community.

After some pleasant discussion with Father Buhler, and others of the clergy, the bishop turned to another subject, saying that it had been stated in the newspapers that Catholics were denying the facts of his tory.

"It is a hopeful sign," replied Father Williams. "It shows that they are blushing to begin to see themselves as others see them."

"To fear history," rejoined the bishop, "is to own yourself conquered. History is our master, and we cannot distort or obliterate recorded facts, or fabricate fiction and call it history. If Protestants have history on their side, it is too late now, — they will beat us. If we are ashamed of our record, it only remains for us to make a better one. Like the philosopher, say we are wiser to-day than yesterday."

"If we can, my lord Bishop," replied Father Buhler.

‘We can, if we will. We have made a good commencement this evening; there are two less celibate priests,’ and all joined in the bishop’s laugh. “As we discover the corrupt excrescences, which one after another have become attached, barnacle-like, to our system, we must agitate, protest, remonstrate, and petition, till we get them removed. If that cannot be done, we must turn and forsake them. Indeed, if we lay claim to being a Christian church, we must do as other Christian churches do, build on the rock, Christ Jesus; encourage genuine, not *garbled* education, which is equivalent to no education. We must keep pace with the times; abolish the things of which we are ashamed.”

“How can that be done?” asked Father Williams.

“By freeing ourselves from the Jesuitical element, that cannot honestly remain here, being pledged to support the political power of an Italian, as the supreme head of this country. Very little can be done in the right direction as long as we are trammelled by their intrigues. They must be exiled from the land, as they have so often been from the countries of Europe, where Catholics have been first and foremost to exclude them.”

“I have something to say about that,” intensely replied Father Buhler, “We have colleges and learned men, and, if left alone, would be strongly entrenched. I do not propose to go out of the country.”

“You do not,” returned the Bishop, with becoming

dignity, "then, my brother, I advise you to revoke your miserable vow, which makes you a traitor here, for 'no man can serve two masters: he will hold to one, and despise the other.' In good faith take the oath of allegiance, and become a loyal citizen of the United States. This is the duty of the hour. My mission is from henceforth to help wake up the people to see that the Constitution is honored, and a scene of anarchy avoided. We could not live in some countries; our fallen church has made them only fit to move away from. See here, I'll read you a part of my friend's letter. He is traveling in South America, in the state of Ecuador."

The bishop reads,—

"One-fourth of the property in Ecuador belongs to the bishop. For every one hundred and fifty people is a church. Of the population, ten per cent. are priests, monks and nuns; and two hundred and seventy-two days of the three hundred and sixty-five of the year are observed as fast and feast days. Priests control the Government in all its branches, dictate the laws, and see to their enforcement. Not five per cent. of the people can read or write, and three-fourths of the children are born illegitimate. In hardly any place in the world is property so insecure. Beggars and bandits abound. A railroad or stage-coach does not exist; hardly a road or benevolent institution. The ecclesiastical order has gobbled the state. It elects the president and legislature. In a word, the Pope rules in Ecuador, as he does not in Rome, and manages there, as everywhere, to **keep the people in ignorance and poverty.**"

“Now, my Lord Bishop, I do not see why you make out so dark a record for us,” cried Buhler, in a tried tone.

“I do not make it out, facts and history proclaim it. History, the great dictator, to whom the Pope and papacy must bow. You Jesuits reach out and try to smother the voice of history, — to stop the onward march of civilization. You are not friends of education, because you think the masses can not be managed, if educated; you are some five hundred years behind the times, and if you remain where you are, will be overwhelmed by waves of progress, more resistless than the mighty waves of the sea. These great movements for the uplifting of the race, caused by the widespread influences of the Bible, it is useless to combat. Woe be unto him who seeks to raise his puny arm against that which God ordains.”

“My Lord Bishop, your charge against Jesuits still surprises me,” said Father Buhler. “I thought you were one with us and reckoned on your help to influence the elections this fall.”

“That’s the trouble,” replied the bishop. “You Jesuits will always be meddling with politics. There is where Rome apostatized. That is why we have become obnoxious in this land. To make amends, the rallying cry with your order should be, ‘Disarm! disarm!’ Merge loyally in this hospitable country, and not like the viper warmed to life by the fire of the husbandman, seek fatally to sting your bene-

factor. If indeed you will not retract, and do justly here, go back at once to some defunct kingdom of the old world, made such by your wiles, and, folding your arms, die with it."

"Yes, yes, brother," said the bride Clarissima, intensely awakened. "Help this noble country that has sheltered us, and not be obliged to take refuge in another."

"Sister, you are only the bishop's echo, and what can you know about this question?" rejoined Buhler bitterly. Then turning to the bishop, "I think you are fearfully hard on us when we are so near getting the reins of power, and if we succeed, you might be the same as prime minister, at least."

"I abhor from my inmost soul all ill-gotten spoils," was the stately reply, "whether highway robbery, bank-stealing, defaulting, or any form of swindling a nation out of its government and funds."

"We have a good name," said Buhler. "The Society of Jesus, that sounds well, and is above all suspicion of evil."

"In every sense I disagree with you," replied the bishop. "You profess to be what you are not. You deny Him, and His teachings in every possible way. His deeds were good-will to men; yours are subjugation, crowding down every noble aspiration, taking away the key of knowledge, hiding the way of salvation. The Pope agreed to what I said of you Jesuits when I was in the Vatican, and, my

Clarissma, I am sure believes what I say," and he looked on her in a loving, admiring way.

She blushingly assented.

"Sister mine," asked Buhler, turning to the bride, Mrs. Williams, "were you ever in favor of Jesuits?"

"I must own," she replied, "that I once sympathized with them, but I have lost patience, since I've found them out. I learn that they have brought down on us the contempt and disgust of the best people of the land, and we have our hands full to get a standing place among them. Those who indorse the Order are looked upon as full of treachery and deceit."

"In what respect?" asked Father Pecci, who was wonder-struck at the turn of the tide and the stand taken by one so recently from Rome, and in the confidence of his kinsman of the Vatican.

"In every respect that indicates character," was the reply of the bishop. "I wish you, my brethren, Buhler, Pecci and Krafts, would leave the Order, and make acknowledgement for ever belonging to it. All good Catholics will support you in it. Far better be a bandit,—his crimes are light compared with the conspiracy which plans to throttle this nation and confiscate its treasures. What is highway robbery to that? Besides, you Jesuits obstruct the streams of knowledge, even trying to go back and poison the fountain head of history. We, as a church, are blush-

ing over our record of the dark ages, and you come to the rescue with lying divination, and say that 'black is white,' and insist that the school-books shall be changed over to suit the black-white theory, and that the rising generation shall be nurtured on falsehood. Your intrigues are an outrage; your doings an execration."

"I have yet to learn how we poison the fountains of knowledge," said Buhler, with an abashed air of unwilling conviction.

"Histories," replied the bishop, "that take the same ground that some thirty Dictionaries and Encyclopædias of standard world-wide renown, are rejected because they define indulgences, and what they have done for Rome,—as if we could blot out the fact that St. Peter's cathedral was built in a great measure by money obtained by granting indulgences! It is useless for us to say that indulgences are not patent in our church, when the Pope is constantly issuing them. They are in order, as the recent dispensation given a prince to marry his niece, and many similar grants, show."

"Admitted that we do revise history, how do we harm geography," asked Pecci, anxious to drop the question of indulgences.

"I am told," was the reply, "that the scholar is taught in his Manual of Geography that London is the chief town of a small island off the coast of France. How long can children of this era be blinded

to the fact that London is the largest city on the globe, having five millions of inhabitants?"

"Well," said Buhler, "I must own that the case looks dark for us. I do n't mind breaking my oath, since I made it with a mental reservation. If, you, my Lord Bishop, can lead the way out, I think I am ready to follow."

"And I can say no less, my Lord," meekly said Father Pecci; in which assertion Father Krafts also joined.

But how can men accustomed to do evil learn to do well, save by the grace of Christ? We shall see that this was a fit of repentance of short duration.

XXII.

Taking Counsel.

AS Mrs. Leavenworth came into the Aid Rooms one day after a prolonged absence, Grace was specially delighted, and planned to consult her the first spare moment. She was also warmly welcomed by her associates in the good work ; and soon finding Ella Southbury, she gave her words of the kindest appreciation of her skill in her department. Then there were several newly-arrived refugees to initiate into the comforts provided for them. When they were cared for, and made to feel quite at ease, through the united efforts of mother and daughter ; when others were forwarded on their homeward way, and business affairs arranged, Grace laid her commands upon her mother, and smuggled her into the small parlor that she might have her all to herself. Seating her on the sofa, she clasped her neck, saying,—

“O mother, I have so longed to see you.”

“Have you, darling ? and my heart has gone out to you. I felt that you were in trial. Why did you not

write? Ah, what is this, an engagement ring? This shows that you have settled matters in regard to the Count. You are engaged! And this is the first intimation you give me."

"Yes, mamma, engaged, and yet it is not a genuine engagement, or I would before this have told you."

"Well, that is strange," replied the loving mother. "Now tell me all about it, and if there is a shade of doubt, you must become disengaged!" and she concluded with a cheery laugh, for her habit was to brighten every life under her influence.

"It is just here, mamma. I am puzzled to understand how I became engaged so very suddenly in the face of my resolution. I am a marvel to myself. Just see this ring; it does not suit me. I have determined to put it by. It is shocking to my feelings, and sacrilege to wear it."

"You certainly must not wear it if it makes you unhappy. It seems to me that there are two questions to be settled," replied the mother. "Is this man worthy of your love? and, if so, do you love him?"

"Yes, mamma, you are right," replied the daughter. "When I am in his society sometimes I admire him; but this must be simply his personal magnetism, for when away from him, I am tortured with questioning suspicion, which shows that I do not even fully respect him."

"There must be some reason for this," wisely said the mother.

“Yes, there is, indeed, and that is the trouble.”

She then showed her mother the anonymous letter, telling her that she had seen the writer, — the dwarf, Paul Murray, and of his further charges against Stilling.

“Darling child, what a trial you are going through! Who is this dwarf, and what did you say to him?”

“I am trying to find out who he is, and shall not rest until I do,” was the reply. “At first I reprovèd him; but decided to hear his story, which was to the effect that he was for years in the Count’s employ, and knew him to be a false man; he testified also that he had been married and lost his wife, and had two little girls living. Do you wonder that my strength is gone, and that I am scarcely able to keep up, when I hear such horrible things?”

“I do not, indeed, my darling,” was the sympathizing reply. “I am utterly surprised. I had supposed him above suspicion, and it seems absurd and slanderous to say such things of him; but in the circumstances you do well to pause before going a step further. You must be cautious, and learn all about him.”

“So I think, mamma. But isn’t it dreadful to be suspicious! If it were not for the noise of the affair, I sometimes think I would have the dwarf leave his deposition with a lawyer. First, he should produce the children and have their testimony taken. If, however, no good proof could be sustained, my en-

gement would be forever broken. I could not marry a man whom I had so far doubted as to bring his affairs before a justice, even if he was cleared and could forgive me, and still wished me to keep my promise."

"Of course not," said the mother.

"Was n't it strange," added Grace, "that I did not think a word about that letter when he took me to drive, until after the engagement?"

"Very strange," was the reply.

"When he asked me why I was so reticent and grave," said Grace, "I did venture to say to him that we were almost strangers, and that I knew too little of his antecedents."

"What did he say to that?" asked Mrs. Leavenworth, in surprise.

"He was startled at first, but soon regained self-possession. What surprises me is the ease with which he dispelled my apprehensions, and the power he exercised over me to induce me to become engaged to him. It is more than I can account for. I must be strangely weak and vascillating, and how can I trust him when he influenced me so strangely?"

"You may well ask that," replied the mother, lost in thought.

"I sometimes think," said Grace, "that the dwarf's story may have a shadow of truth, and narrow-minded prejudice and malice make up the charges he brings. But, as we say of a corrupt system of religion, 'a lie

that is a lie may be met with and fought outright, but a lie that is part a truth is harder to fight, so if this man is guilty of light offences, and is charged with more serious ones, I see not how he is to be cleared."

"It seems to me, if a good man, that he is patient and forbearing," said the mother, "or he would not care to go on with his engagement. I am sorry all is not well for your own sake and for your father's sake. He has long corresponded with and is greatly taken with the Count. I myself do not want to give you up for many years, if ever."

"I must at once get at more positive information," said Grace. "I must have good reason if I receive what the dwarf says; and if there are children, as he asserts, must follow up the matter and see them."

"I'd like to cross-question that dwarf. Where can he be found?" asked the mother.

"I do not know. He will doubtless come again; he is quite in earnest to break up my engagement, and he was on the point of telling me where the children could be found when the Count appeared, and put an end to his communication."

Here Mrs. Leavenworth's carriage came, and she was obliged to take leave of Grace, and join her husband at her home, some miles distant.

"Be very careful what you do, dear child," she said as she left, "and we must sift this matter to the

bottom. All will come out right, darling, if we do our best and trust in God to help us."

Saying this, the good lady embraced her daughter, and bade her good-bye.

Before she left town, however, her sister, Mrs. Byington, sought her counsel.

"Look here, sister Mary, I am in a difficulty, and want the use of your good judgment a few moments."

"All right, sister; what can I do for you?" was the genial answer.

"You see, Mary, I am in danger of being unduly influenced by Cousin John Van Allstyn. I know you'll think it so foolish, but he has roomed here, and is my pastor, and I have become used to thinking in his rut, and something must be done, or I fear I shall some day fall into the Catholic church, as he wishes."

"Why, Miriam, you, of all persons! I never dreamed of such an evil befalling you. How did the danger happen to exist?"

"It is his constant, persistent influence, I make no doubt, and, what is worse, he is over persuading Louise more than me. That's what opened my eyes. He has for some time tried to coax her to join a convent."

"The idea!" exclaimed Mrs. Leavenworth.

"She has promised him that she will do so, at some future time, and give her property to the church.

Now I have a plan, — do you know how he tries to move me to succumb to Rome?"

"I have n't the faintest idea," replied Mrs. Leavenworth.

"You must know then, that he has for some time told me, and almost made me believe, that when the Romanists get power, they will at once confiscate my property, and most likely imprison me, because I sheltered Ella Southbury when she came back. That frightens Louise, and she is ready to bow down to that which she thinks is soon to be the ruling authority. To offset all this bad influence, I want to sell my place to your husband. We talked the matter over, and he said he would buy it whenever I was ready to dispose of it, and now, while cousin John is off on his vacation, I wish to arrange things, and take Louise on a tour to Europe. We will travel awhile, and then settle down in Germany. I think, Louise must go on with her marred education. Cousin John is not to know where we are. I shall manage that. I see that this is the only way to keep her from going into a convent. Louise is just possessed when the rector is around, but calms down when he is away. What do you think of my plan?"

"I think it is wise," replied Mrs. Leavenworth, "and will help you all I can. If mothers, who have daughters inclined to listen to syren songs about the beauties of the foul cloister, would awake to the

danger, take them abroad, more fully educate them, and give them worthier work to do, they would save many a one from the destroyer."

"I think so," was the reply. "Now please tell your husband to come down to-morrow, and I will have papers made out, and deed this estate to him. Cousin John's things can be removed to his old rooms in the hotel. I shall leave a note for him, saying I have decided to go abroad. Of one thing you may be sure, none of my property will ever help sustain a nunnery; and when Louise comes to her senses, she will say the same of hers, when she receives it. If not, I have made my will so that not one cent can go to the covetous system."

"Oh, Miriam, I am rejoiced to find you so decided for the right."

"I saw it all, almost as soon as cousin John left, on his long, three-months' vacation. He is travelling in Alaska for his health, you may know, and does not write. I think he is on some mission of a secret kind. Tell your husband that now is my time to get clear of what may be a life-long trammel, and I want him to help me out immediately by buying my place."

"All right, sister; I will give him your message, and am sure he will be glad to do as you wish," and the cheery lady hastened away.

XXIII.

A. Discovery.

PAUL, having received his pay for a job of work, immediately called at the store on Blank street, to see little Elsaë. Mrs. Ranney, with smiles, assured him that the child was well and happy, and had gone to bed for a forenoon nap, and she did not wish to disturb her. She added that it would be better for the child if he did not call often, until she was wonted to the place. He left money for her board, and, weary with over-work, started to cross the city to Mrs. Bryan's cottage, to inquire after Anna Still-
ing. As he painfully made his way up the street, he found himself in a stream of mill-people, eager for home and dinner. He eyed them attentively, and thought them a happy set of laborers. They were mostly hale-looking, laughed and talked cheerily, still keeping on a quick pace, and wasting no time.

He said to himself, "I wish I had a snug place in the mill, and my regular wages of honest day-light work coming in."

Just then a familiar curly-head came near, and a voice exclaimed,—

“Oh, good Paul, is it you? I'm so glad!”

“I am glad to see you,” was the tremulous exclamation of Paul, as the child Anna Stilling clung to him, crying for joy.

“Lizzie, oh, Lizzie!” for that young lady had joined them, “this is our Paul. He was very kind to mother, little sister, and me. I was afraid I should never see you again, Paul, it has been so long.”

“I give you a grand welcome, Mr. Paul,” heartily replied Lizzie. “Come in; this is the place where Anna boards,” as they reached 64 Maple street, the attractive cottage of the Bryans.

Mrs. Bryan and Mary kindly greeted Paul, as Lizzie introduced him. He asked the favor of boarding with them, which they were glad to grant, and it was to him like making land after a stormy voyage. He could not, however, be idle, but soon made himself useful in helping Mrs. Bryan refurnish her rooms, his good taste being never at fault.

“You are a jewel of a helper,” said Mrs. Bryan. Do you know, dear soul, that you remind me of my sister? What was your mother's name before her marriage, lad?” She called him “lad” not because of his age, but from his size.

“Norah Neil,” was the reply.

“Bless your heart! She was my sister,” exclaimed

Mrs. Bryan. "You have her pleasant ways. Welcome, my darling Norah's son. You've found your friends in being friendly."

The tears came in Paul's eyes, and he could not speak for joy, while Mrs. Bryan added,—

"You shall have a home with me while you live, my dear Paul."

"It is too good to be true, that I can live with my mother's kin, and can care for the dear lady's children, too.

"My brother, Dennis Bryan, when he leaves the mill, will be opening a store, and if you can help him, he will give you a place with a good salary."

Mrs. Bryan's brother, a keen, shrewd man, a foreman in the mill, was also sometimes called to officiate as a detective.

That would be nice," replied Paul. "I can earn my living in that way."

"Faith, Katie," said Mr. Bryan to his sister, at dinner, the next day, as he loaded Paul's plate with the best cut of the tempting roast beef, "that off-scouring of the world accidentally did us a good deed. In casting off his children, he put us in the way of finding our lost nephew. God can bring good out of bad men's deeds.

"Yes, Dennis, you are right," was the reply. "But, Paul dear, why don't you eat? You are growing white from fasting. Dear me! the lad's fainting," and she caught him as he was falling from the chair,

and with her brother's help, laid him upon the lounge.

"Bring water, Mary; quick, child, quick! Throw open the door, Dennis!"

Then, as she bathed Paul's forehead, he groaned and opened his eyes, each member of the family watching him with affectionate solicitude.

"It's over-working has done him the mischief," said Mr. Bryan, fondly bending over Paul, as Mrs. Bryan chaffed his brow with camphor.

"O Mary, Mary," cried Anna, "will my Paul die?"

"No, no, that can not be," was the reply. "He was breaking down, and came here in time to save his life. My mother is the best of nurses; it's almost a pleasure to be sick under her care. She's worth forty doctors."

Clang, clang went the mighty-voiced mill bell, calling ten thousand people to their chosen sweat-of-the-brow labor.

"With submission, Katie," said Dennis Bryan; "for once the bell surprises me too early. I'll be passing Doctor Dosem's office, and will send him to see what ails the lad."

"Yes, dear," was the reply. But none the less settled was the buxom little woman, that in the matter of tending and nursing Paul, she would use her own best judgment, despite the doctor's directions.

"Sorry to see you sick, young man," said the

smiling Dr. Dosen, as he bustled in, for skillful Dr. Christie was out of town. "What you been doing? Overwork, eh? Let me feel your pulse. Your tongue, Humph!" Taking out blue pills, powders and drops, he wrote special directions how to use them. The doctor was a crafty Jesuit

"What is the matter with him, doctor dear?" asked Mrs. Bryan, following him to the door.

"Oh, he's got to be pretty sick before he is better. His system needs a thorough overhauling. He'll only get it by being sick three months. I'll call again to-morrow."

"Never mind. I'll send for you if he is n't better, doctor," she replied, frightened at the prospect of a prolonged sickness.

"And it's better he'll be," said the little woman to herself, as she returned to Paul. "He shall have rest and good nursing, and the medicines shall doctor the fire." Then to him, "Faith, my lad, I shall have you well in a week, and the big shadow of a doctor will darken the door no more."

Paul murmured thanks, smiled contentedly, and closed his eyes for a nap, after the excitement of seeing the doctor. Meanwhile Mrs. Bryan made brown-bread sugar-coated pills; for powders, she had white sugar, for drops molasses and water, and the medicine stand, with its white covering, beside Paul's bed, was as presentable as at first. She kept her secret, and gave the doses at the hours indicated. At regular

intervals she also brought Paul the nicest gruel and beef-tea, and soothed him with her pleasant chat. Paul was cheerful as regarded himself, and it was a comfort to be able to see Anna every day, but his heart smote him with forbodings when he thought of poor little Elsae. Mrs. Bryan, to whom he confessed his fears, was sanguine that the child had found a good harbor.

“But we’ll be looking her up, when you are better, Paul. She shall be well cared for.”

As the doctor was passing the next morning, he stopped before the door, and bowing to Mrs. Bryan, who was sweeping the steps, said,—

“How’s the young man this morning, ma’am?”

“He’s better, thank you,” said she, with a bright smile, “Bless your heart, doctor, the lad slept like a top, the whole night, and he’s quite himself this morning, thank God.”

“Mother of Mercy!” gasped the doctor, hearing this alarming account of the convalescence of his patient. “Good morning, Mrs. Bryant,” and with an impatient cut of his whip, away he flew on his rounds, muttering to himself, “That woman is a witch of a nurse. I’ll bet she has n’t given the medicines according to my direction. If she had, he ought to be very sick before he is better. Nurses like Mrs. Bryan, scattered among my patients, would cripple my income.”

When Paul was able to walk out, an excursion was

planned to Mt. Airy, a beautiful eminence in the vicinity of the city, with a coronet of pines and firs. The usual variety of forest trees adorned its sides, and its base was washed by the deep winding stream that loitered on its way, and which paid tribute to the navigable river, that not far distant poured its wealth of waters into the sea. The mount was a great resort in the summer, and Paul often went there to fill his lungs with the fragrant healing air and feast his eyes with the beautiful sights of the forest wild. He had become familiar with Mt. Airy's steep, as well as sloping sides, its nooks and dells and winding paths, as he explored the eminence in search of treasures of wild flowers, rare mosses and ever-greens.

One day, as he was taking a stroll through the woods, suddenly a hand was heavily laid upon his shoulder, and turning, he was face to face with Stilling.

"I've a little matter to settle with you, young man," said Stilling, trembling with anger. "You've played the traitor on me. I've watched you; I've kept on your track; and here, see what I've found," producing the identical letter which Paul had written to warn Miss Leavenworth. It had been dropped by her mother, to whom she had confided it.

The dwarf was startled, but silent.

"What have you to say to that? You warn my betrothed wife against me. A higher crime you could not commit. I belong to a secret society

that will not abide to have its members slandered. It is powerful, and its long arms reach even here. It deposes me to take vengeance into my hands, and punish you as you deserve."

And without waiting for Paul's reply, he quickly seized him, and ran to the precipitous ledge to throw him into the river that rolled deep and dark below. At the same moment a voice called out,—

"Hallo there, what you up to, stranger?"

This so wrought upon the Count, that, without turning his head, Jesuit-like, he desisted from his purpose, and commenced to talk and laugh with Paul as if in play.

"Shall I give you a ducking, my lad? Say, now, would you like to take a cool bath? Shall I throw you in the river?" making a feint of doing so.

By this time Mr. Bryan, for it was he, came up and sternly eyeing Stilling, said,—

"What are you doing with my lad?"

"Your lad?" returned Stilling, with surprise, letting go the dwarf. "I am playing with him. Is there any law against that?"

"If you harrum the lad," hotly replied the man, "I'll teach you that there is a law in this land that'll interfere and take care of the helpless."

"My good sir, be easy," was the bland reply. "A little harmless play will invigorate him. I was only doing him a good turn. Have you any objection to that?"

"I have a decided objection to your meddling with

the lad at all," was the reply. "You have no business to dandle him over a precipice, and you may expect me to report you to the authorities, and let them keep an eye on your doings. I, myself, doubt if you ought to be allowed at large."

"Man alive! do you dream to whom you are talking?" exclaimed Stilling, in his pompous way. "Paul, my friend," in the most conciliating tones, "can you not tell him who I am?"

The dwarf had seated himself beside a tree, his lame back having been hurt by the rough onslaught. He was deathly pale, and faint with the horror of being cast into the eddying gulf below, and then the baseness of pretence that it was fool's play added a silent white-heat anger to his intense emotions.

"If I tell him who you are, I shall tell him the whole truth," boldly uttered Paul, as soon as he could command his breath.

"Is it a Count you are?" sneeringly said Mr. Bryan. "More correctly, you are the grand villain of the world."

"Silence!" shouted Stilling, to Bryan. "Paul, I call on you, as my faithful friend, to testify that this man has slandered me. I shall have him up before the courts, and summon you as witness." And the Count strode loftily away, but on second thought, returned and stooping to where Paul sat, whispered in his ear an insidious threat, then retracing his steps, left the mount,

“Calls his name ‘Count,’ does he?” asked Mr. Bryan. “It don’t belong to the thief at all. And what might he be saying to you, my lad?”

“It’s not worth minding,” said Paul, intent on keeping his own counsel. “I would bring him to justice if I knew how to do it.”

“That’s easily done, my lad. Call on a justice of the peace, and make your confession of the man’s evil deeds. Do that, my lad, and you’ve stopped him from going about seeking whom he may devour.”

XXIV.

A. Dream of Conquest.

COMMEND me to the good old times when only a few could learn the alphabet," outspoke Archbishop Bland, the rotund, haughty Irishman, from the depths of an easy-chair, at one of the Madonna Hall receptions, in Bishop Berlin's absence, some time after the nuptials.

"Two hundred years ago," he continued, "our wise prelates used to say, 'We must root out printing, or printing will root us out.' And if I had my way I'd hang all the printers and school-teachers."

"Too much education is the blight of this country," chimed in Father Buhler, ignoring his late concessions to the bishop. DeMaistre maintains that 'ignorance is better than science, for science comes from men, and ignorance comes from God.'

"Yes, yes," replied his grace; "that's well put. The art of printing has done us untold mischief. We have n't been able to root it out. It is true that we squelched the Reformation, in the 'Thirty Years

War,' but somehow its errors survived, rise up, and march on. We must maintain eternal vigilance, to hold our own, and what we cannot destroy, must manage and manipulate. Our Jesuit Fathers — bless them, may their shadows never grow less — have done excellent service in regard to school books for our higher theological seminaries, as well as for parochial schools. They have a great genius for making them over in the line of the teachings of the church, — and the children can leave the parochial school almost as innocent of knowledge, save the scapular, rosary, and the catechism, as when they went in. Our fundamental principle is to hold the masses in ignorance, the better to keep them subservient and devotional. Ignorance is the mother of devotion ; there is no doubt of it."

"That used to be taught, your grace," replied Father Williams, who had just come in from the Beach Hotel, where himself and wife were domiciled for the summer. "But times have changed, and we are at our wits' ends to know how to arrange this school question. Willingly, or not willingly, we are forced to raise the standard of knowledge."

"For awhile, it may be," rejoined the Archbishop, "but we've no cause for alarm, as long as we have more than a half million of children daily drilled and catechised, by thousands of priests and nuns. Courage, my brothers, the devotional shades of the Middle Ages will soon infold us. We shall have our old power back again, Inquisition and all."

"May the queen of heaven grant it," piously rejoined Father Krafts, forgetting his promise to the bishop. "But may I ask if your Grace has noted the great gatherings at Faneuil Hall, and other places recently, as reported in the papers?"

"No, my son," was the sage reply, "I pay little heed to the dailies,—which, by the way, our learned Jesuits should take in tow by bribery. The *Catholic Weekly* gives a sufficient digest for my purpose."

"Yes, your Grace, save when we Jesuits are attacked. Our papers cannot refute these criticisms without enlightening the people too much."

The circle of priests was apart from the nuns, who were near the piano, at the other end of the double-parlor, chanting in a pitiful, monotonous way,—

"Ave sanctissima."

"Ora pro nobis."

The Lady Superior, however, for the most part, sat beside the Archbishop, intently listening, and as she heard his philippics, was almost stifled with intense counter emotions. In her sanctum of thought, popery and prelate were out of date, and she wondered that she had ever endured their false assumptions.

"Exactly," said the Archbishop, in reply to Buhler. "We know better than to enlighten the public as to the weapons heretics use against us. Pity any of our people can read."

"I have noticed," interposed Madame Clarissima, "when the sun has risen, it is hard to keep it from shining."

The Archbishop looked round apprehensively, but made no reply. At length, turning to Buhler, he asked,—

“What was done at Faneuil Hall that concerns us?”

“Many eloquent speakers denounced us Jesuits for meddling with the schools, and school histories, and exterminating resolutions were adopted with great enthusiasm.”

“All bombast,” exclaimed an ecclesiastic.

“More bomb-like than bombastic,” replied Father Krafts, bitterly.

“Ha! ha! ha!” laughed the purblind Archbishop, “let the bigots fire away. The church is impregnable, and these squibs are like so many pop-guns fired at the Rock of Gibraltar. In the good old times our code was, ‘*turn or burn*,’ and bless my eyes, they’ll see the same in force ere long.”

“True, your Grace,” rejoined Father Krafts. “But it seems that educated men and women are the backers here. You see, my Lord, there are so many new associations, that gather information about our practices, doctrines and movements, to incite and stir up business men, many of whom would otherwise be indifferent, attending simply to money-making, as in the past.”

“Educated women, eh?” exclaimed the prelate, more seriously, as if it were a new idea especially abhorrent.

“Yes,” replied Madame Clarissima. “And I notice when intelligent women awake, in this country, they mightily influence public opinion. There was the Women’s Crusade of fourteen years ago,—what a power that is to-day in the great Temperance Union that came in its place!”

She had learned this from Grace Leavenworth, recently.

“Ah!” said the Archbishop, as he puffed a cigar. “Go on.”

“I am no croaker, my Lord,” continued Father Krafts, who considered himself chief speaker, and a genuine son of Loyola, despite his pledge to Bishop Berlin, “but I venture to predict that when these educated men and women are on our track, we cannot elude them. We do well to remember that Protestants are greatly in the majority, and if once waked up, can easily defeat our plans.”

“There may be something in that,” coolly observed the Archbishop, still smoking his cigar; “there may be a contest, but we’ve no cause for alarm.”

“We’ve every cause for alarm. God is in the movement,” exclaimed Madame Clarissima, unable to keep silence.

The Archbishop was so far soothed by nicotine that he was only mildly surprised, and continued to smoke, greatly to the disgust of the lady.

Father Pecci, the Pope’s nephew, trembled with fear, yet found voice to say,—

“I pray all the saints to keep us from being turned out of this land. We’ve been expelled so many times from different countries of Europe! What started the people?”

“It’s that everlasting school question,” returned Father Buhler.

“Of course,” said the prelate, — “ever since 1864. We’ve got a twenty-five years’ start.”

“That’s what excites them,” added Father Krafts. “Education is everything with these Americans, and hosts of our people are drinking in the same seditious spirit.”

“All that’s wanted to bring them to terms is the old-time discipline of torture and the rack,” growled the Archbishop.

“I think so, too,” echoed Father Pecci. “The Pope will find means to make them obey.”

“Of course, if he can,” replied Madame Clarissima, spicily. “But he is in his dotage, and only an Italian citizen in the Vatican prison.”

“With all reverence for his Holiness,” remarked Father Krafts, “he is far too hot-headed and presumptuous. He has needlessly aroused an unsuspecting people when they have it in their power to defeat his plans.”

“Tut, tut, my son,” said the Archbishop, “not so fast.”

“I beg your Grace’s pardon, I am the Pope’s most obedient son,” rejoined Father Krafts, “but his

advisors, the cardinals, forget that the highly educated intelligent people of America are very different from the Italians and the people of Spain, and he makes false moves."

"That remains to be seen," slowly uttered the Archbishop.

"I would not criticise his holiness," replied Father Krafts, "but there is danger that we shall fail, as in the last war. It was the plan of Pius IX., as we all know, to destroy this Union, by endorsing secession; but all the Irish Catholics, moved by the enthusiasm of the hour, went into the rank and file of the Union army, loyal to this country and disloyal to Rome."

"Yes," said Madame Clarissima; "the two are antagonistic, as is maintained in the patriotic speeches often made, I am told. We must remember that when the Pope sanctioned the rebellion, the Union Army needed more than ever the loyal Irish."

"I'd risk all these windy speeches," remarked the prelate with emphatic ire, "if there were no renegades to give information of our movements."

"So would I, your excellency," exclaimed Father Pecci,— "renegade Romanists, and American women for leaders!"

"Ave sanctissima."

"Ora pro nobis."

"We lift our hearts to Thee"

Thus sang the nuns around the piano, at the opposite end of the room, oblivious of the conversation.

"It is a pity," remarked Father Buhler, "that these leaders cannot be silenced; they do much mischief, and one and another, from time to time, drop out of our ranks. Indeed, some entire families have lately seceded from the holy mother church. I notice, too, that there is a growing desire to remove to the farming districts from the city, and avoid church taxes and church schools."

"That's natural," said the Archbishop, still composedly smoking.

"I am confident, however," said Madame Clarissima, "that this waking up of the Protestants will not subside. There are in one city, a hundred picked men on a committee, to take immediate action to protect the public schools from the assaults of the Romish hierarchy. If I were a Jesuit, I should in all haste betake myself to some country more easily ruled, where ignorance truly is bliss."

"One hundred picked men!" slowly and sarcastically said the prelate, still smoking. "It looks as if we should really have to emigrate, as it has been reported his Holiness is planning to do, to a small island on the coast, or to Spain, as more eligible, eh? Ha! ha!" and his rollicking laugh rose above every other sound in the apartment, although the nuns were still chanting their interminable hymn to the Virgin.

The Archbishop lived in luxury, and was adverse to looking on the dark side of the picture.

“One hundred picked men! what are they in contending with our thousands of Jesuits, all picked men, trained all their lives to manipulate political, educational, and religious affairs?”

“I know, your Grace,” replied Madame Clarissima. “It looks like an unequal contest. But if the Lord is with the one hundred, they are infinitely in the majority.”

“It is my advice,” said the prelate, loftily, yet uneasily, ignoring her words, as he removed the cigar from his mouth, and knocked the ashes into the card receiver on the pier-table at his elbow, to the dismay of the Superioress, “to keep quiet, and pay little attention to this noise and stir. As I make my next returns to his Holiness, I shall state the case, and advise him to give the priests discretionary power in regard to starting parochial schools, and when started, have them less exacting in requiring all to attend. The fact is, he must conciliate and yield a little.”

“I think so, decidedly; great changes have him in their power,” added the lady, resting her fan, and nervously swaying in the rocker.

“Not that there is cause for alarm,” added the Archbishop, in his pompous way. “And now, my children, if you will lend me your ears, I will tell you a story which illustrates what we prelates think, and how we work for the church,—

“Some thirty years ago, a certain Father, who has since apostatized, was appointed to a church in the

state of Illinois. Soon he influenced five thousand French Canadians to join him at his post near Chicago. His enterprise was thought a great success.

“Seeing this, D’Arcy McGee, then the editor of the *Freeman’s Journal* of New York, set out to form a colony of Irish Romanists. He wrote articles in his paper, showing that they were demoralized and kept down in the cities, and argued that they would be greatly improved if they could be led to leave their city grog-shops and saloons, for farming the fertile western lands.

“He kept writing about it, and called a convention, which many priests attended, to consider the matter. It was a miserable failure, for the bishops of Albany, New York, and Boston, sent many priests, instructing them to appear and upset the plan. The majority of the priests were faithful to their bishops, and made reply in words to this effect, which I had the pleasure of assisting in preparing. This was the address we made through the priests, to overrule D’Arcy’s movement,—

“We are determined, like you, to take possession of the United States and rule them; but we cannot do that except by acting secretly, and by using the utmost wisdom. *If our plans were known they would certainly be defeated.* What does a skilful general do when he wants to conquer a country? Does he scatter his soldiers over the farm lands and spend their time and energies in plowing the fields and sowing the grain? No. He keeps them well united

around his banners, and marches at their head to the conquest of the strongholds. He subdues the large cities one after the other; he pulls down the high towers and the citadels which he meets on his way. Then the farming countries are conquered, and become the price of his victory without moving a finger. So it is with us. Silently and patiently we must mass our Roman Catholics in the great cities of the United States. Let us remember that in this country the vote of one of our poorest journeymen covered with rags, has as much weight in the scale of power as the vote of the millionaire Astor, and that if we have two votes against the millionaire's one, he becomes as powerless as an oyster. Then let us multiply our voters; let us call our poor, but faithful Catholics, and gather them from the far corners of the world into the very heart of those proud citadels which the Yankees are so proudly building up under the name of New York, Boston, Chicago, Albany, Troy, etc. Under the shadows of those great cities the Americans consider themselves as a giant and an unconquerable race. They look upon the Irish Catholic with the utmost contempt, as only fit to dig their canals, sweep their streets, or humbly cook their meals in their kitchen. Let no one awake these sleeping lions to-day; let us pray God that they may sleep and dream their sweet dreams a few years more. How sad will be their awakening when, with our out-numbering votes, we will turn them out, and forever, from every position of power, honor, and profit. What will these hypocritical sons and daughters of the fanatical Pilgrim Fathers say, when not a single judge, not a single school-teacher, not even a single policeman will be elected, if he be not a devoted Catholic? What will those so-called giants think and say of their unsurpassed ability, skill and shrewdness, when not a single governor, senator or

member of Congress will be elected, if he be not sincerely devoted to our holy Father, the Pope? What a sad figure those Protestant Yankees will cut when we elect not only the President, but fill and command the armies, man the navy, and have the keys of the public treasury in our hands! It will then be the time for our devoted Catholics to give up their grog-shops, to become the governors and judges of the land. Then our poor and humble mechanics will come out from the damp ditches and the canals to rule the cities in all their departments, from the stately mansion of mayor to the more humble, though not less noble, position of school-teacher. Then, yes, we will rule the United States, and lay them at the feet of the Vicar of Jesus Christ, that he may put an end to their godless system of education, and sweep away those impious laws of liberty of conscience which are an insult to God and man.

“This was uttered more than thirty years ago,” explained the prelate, “and our plans of conquest are to-day full as shapely and far-reaching.”

“That plan was the effort of great genius,” remarked Father Buhler. “It was originated before my day, your Excellency, but I am proud of prelates so wise and far-sighted, and am happy to enter into, and help forward their schemes.”

“Bless you, my son; your talk has the right ring,” said the Archbishop.

“What became of D’Arcy McGee?” asked Father Williams, in a depressed way.

“When the vote was taken, he was left alone!” replied the prelate, with a derisive laugh. “We

don't want any advice. The Pope is infallible, and so is the church."

The Archbishop went on,—

"Our policy, you see, of massing our hordes in the cities, is to manage their votes, and at length control the entire land."

"That is like a general to well marshall his forces," said Father Krafts.

"You are right, my son. Do you know that we are already masters of most of the large cities of the United States, and most of the riches of California. Years ago we had fifty millionnaires in San Francisco alone. So, as I said before, we've no cause to fear, even if American bigots of both sexes do make it hot about our heads, by agitating this annoying school question."

The prelate added, "Irish Romanists rule San Francisco. We Jesuits rule them, soul and body, forming the richest corporation on earth."

"That is fortunate," rejoined Father Buhler, chuckling with gratification; "money is power."

"But surely all these troops will not turn traitors to this glorious country!" cried Madame Clarissima.

"Aue sanctissima."

"We lift our hearts to Thee."

sang the nuns, in melodious refrain.

"We have money in abundance," remarked Archbishop Bland, unmindful of the lady's question, "and plenty of men. While we, as a church, do not allow

any secret societies, whose secrets are kept from us, we have a great many hidden orders under our wing; we even organize them, that we may more securely drill soldiers for the impending conflict."

"You surprise me," said Father Williams, who was an honest-hearted, loyal American. "What secret societies have we?"

"Why, how is it, my son, that you can be so poorly informed? I will name some of them. Besides the Irish American Military Union, there are the Clan-na-Gael, Ancient Order of Hibernians, Pontifical Zouaves, Knights of St. Patrick, Hibernian Rifles, Apostles of Liberty, Benevolent Sons of the Emerald Isle, Knights of St. Peter, Knights of the Red Branch, Knights of Kollumkill, and hundreds of less note."

"Upon my word," said Father Krafts, "the Irish are well organized, — a power by themselves in the heart of this country. As your Grace says, we have no cause to fear. But what amazes me is, the cheek of the thing! Suppose each nationality should demand such liberties?" a touch of German jealousy asserting itself.

At this point a caterer appeared with refreshments, and the nuns and their music teacher were seated ready to partake of the inviting repast. Not a few of the number were grieving over the fate of Sister Estelle. Madame Clarissima rejoiced that she knew that she was free, and longed to give her happy secret to the sad sisters.

“Organized!” exclaimed Father Williams. “Do I understand that these are military companies?”

All these secret associations are military, my son,” was the Archbishop’s profound reply. “Some have their headquarters in New York, and some in San Francisco, while their rank and file are scattered all over the United States.”

“Is it possible?” asked Father Williams, who in imagination saw an outbreak and blood shed as in the last war.

“And are all these men traitors to the laws of the United States?” asked Madame Clarissima.

“It is true,” replied the Archbishop, placidly munching cake and quaffing wine. “No one can serve two masters. It is well to remember,” he went on, “that they number from seven hundred thousand to a million of men, and are known under the name of the United States Militia.”

“But who commands this immense secret army?” was Father William’s query, with his heart appalled for the safety of his country.

“Well questioned, my son,” replied the prelate, after quaffing another glass of wine. “We have attended to that important point, and it is a secret we are keeping from Americans. These well drilled soldiers are mostly officered and commanded by skilful Romanists. We are shrewd enough to see that they command the armies, and man the navy of the United States.”

“We are stronger than I thought,” said Father Buhler cheerily.

“Yes,” added Father Krafts. “The Pope of Rome in point of fact rules here with his million of drilled soldiers.”

“Of course he does. I think it is just delightful,” echoed Father Pecci, as he sipped his wine.

“Yes, Little Mother,” said the Archbishop, turning to the lady patronizingly. “Soon it will be true that we came, saw and conquered. May our most gracious Mary, queen of heaven, prosper our plans that we may succeed.”

Madame Clarissima made no reply, but silently raised her petition to Him who alone has all power in heaven and earth, to save the land from its treacherous invaders. Father William’s heart was also racked with the question which disturbs so many: “How can I be loyal to both church and country? Shall I turn traitor, and help into power in this free land a foreign citizen? Knowing my country’s peril if I keep silent, am I not guilty as an arch-conspirator against her safety?” The feast was a misnomer to him. He could only fast and pray.

As for Madame Clarissima the voice of her heart was: “Woe is me, if I shrink from my duty as an American, and become a party to a plot of wickedness, treachery and blood.” She longed for the bishop to return that she might tell him all. Full of courage and determination she saw that they must at once stand openly on the Lord’s side.

Suddenly it flashed into her mind what to do. Madonna Hall must be reconstructed. No one but loyal Americans shall be on the School Board. It shall be changed from Convent to Seminary, and be wholly reformed, in the line of Gospel faith.

“It shall be country first,” thought the lady. “For it is our home, and the noble constitution has brooded us under its wings, and allowed us to prosper. God will blight us if we turn against His ordinance of good-will and protection, and seek to uproot what He has planted.”

The spirit of the new Reformation was in her heart; she had truly left Rome for the Lord Jesus Christ, and trusted in His infinite power to “rule and overrule till He whose right it is shall reign.”

XXV.

The Dream Interrupted.

THE reception had closed. Madame Clarissima and the nuns had retired to their rooms. Father Williams had left for the Beach Hotel, while Archbishop Bland and Fathers Pecci, Buhler and Krafts tarried in the parlor for a private session before they left the house. This was mainly to plan for the next election, and settle the question, "Shall the Catholic women be permitted to vote?"

"Brethren, what have you to say?" asked the aged prelate, after introducing the subject. "I will listen to you, Father Krafts."

"With me, this question is like that of education," replied Father Krafts. "If the Yankees were not so crazed on learning, we should not need any schools to speak of; but they will educate, and we must make believe that we advocate the idea. And if their women go to the polls, we shall also feel compelled to have ours vote."

“What are your views?” asked the prelate, nodding to Pecci.

“I don’t know how it would work,” replied he. “I wish I knew Uncle Leo’s opinion.”

“What have you to say?” asked the prelate of Buhler.

“It might be a good thing, and then it might not. I wait to hear your Grace’s decision.”

“Venerable brothers,” said that dignitary, in his profound official way, imitating the Pope, who thus addresses his cardinals, “I should pause before I gave our women the right of suffrage, opposed as it is to the genius of our institutions. It is not according to the high ideal which gained us our political strength in the glorious Middle Ages, when we were the universal monarchy, and which ideal, if we are vigilant, will give us back in the near future our ancient heritage.”

“Yes, your excellency,” replied Krafts, “but many of the clergy are anxious to have our women vote.”

“Wrong! decidedly wrong!” rejoined the prelate, arrogantly. “If we allow them to have the ballot, they must be taught the rudiments of education, as many are now unable to read, and this will loosen our hold on them. Catholic girls would cease to earn for awhile, and as we depend largely on their earnings, a part of our income would at once disappear. No; I do not sanction their voting, not even of those already qualified.”

"I wish the Pope would decide it," said Pecci, with a worried look.

"The Pope and I are in full accord," was the prelate's lofty reply. "Voting liberalizes, disenthralles, educates too much, for our women. Last year, I am aware, the clergy foolishly urged the women to vote, but I put it down, and so did the wise editors of our church papers. We have our hands full now, in drilling the swarms of foreigners to get ready for the polls. If we allowed the women to vote, there would be an end to saintly submission and religious subserviency. We should have a rebellious horde to rule."

"True, your Grace; and it would also disturb the nuns in the convents!" said Krafts.

"Oh, no," replied the prelate gruffly; "they have no chance to know what is going on in the world, as they are kept at their devotions and menial duties, and are never allowed to see the papers or hear the news."

"But there is insubordination in the very air," maintained Krafts. "Even Mother Superiors are sometimes tainted with a desire to be free from restraint. Little Mother Clarissima has alarming symptoms. Romanism is an exotic, and in transplanting it, we have to make concessions to suit the popular mind."

"Tut, tut, my son," replied the prelate; "we are far more independent than formerly. What led you to speak of faithless Mother Superiors?"

“ Just this, your Grace, an item in the *Current Notes*.” He reads, —

“ At Santa Fe, New Mexico, the Mother Superior of the convent said, ‘ Tell that Protestant nun, Miss Willard, we are not allowed to go to hear her, but when the convent bell strikes for the Angelus (prayers to the Virgin), we will pray that all the saints of heaven will bless the woman who has come so far to speak to us.’ ”

“ Is n't that rebellion ? bold, impious rebellion ? ”

“ That is, indeed, a most surprising thing, I must admit,” slowly said his Grace, lighting another cigar. “ It seems that the foolish Mother Superior at Sante Fe was anxious to go to a Protestant meeting, and would, if possible, take every nun with her. ‘ We can't go,’ she says ; ‘ but will do the next best thing, send an encouraging message, and turn our prayers to the Virgin,’ for her prosperity and success, which means our overthrow. What daring presumption ! Brothers, we must have sterner discipline ! That Mother Superior should be dealt with after the old regime, — turn or burn ! That reminds me, venerable brothers, that I must get the measurement of the new wing here in its thick walls, as I am to build a similar addition to All Saint's Convent. The architect has never had charge of such construction, and relies on me for details. I believe you helped me in the plans for this building ? ”

“ Yes, your Grace,” replied Buhler. “ We three

were on the building committee, and there is not a better edifice, for the purpose, in the country."

"That's so," echoed Pecci. "The walls are almost as good as those at Rome. I do n't mean equal to St. Peter's Cathedral walls, which are nineteen feet thick."

"That is what is wanted, solid masonry and seclusion," said his Grace. "I will at once take the measurement of the Tombs. It is well to do this by night."

"Yes, far better; no one will see us go in, or have remarks to make," rejoined Buhler.

"Hasten, then, get a light, and we may as well all go," said the Archbishop, with a decided shiver; he was superstitious when a child, and had not fully recovered. "As I have a touch of the gout and rheumatism, I shall not tarry long," he added.

"It may be chilly," said Buhler, "and we must have another quaff of wine before we go," and taking a bottle from the sideboard, he poured out a glass for each.

"That's prime!" exclaimed Pecci. "I remember now, when Uncle Leo sent me several cases of wine, given him at his jubilee, we had them put in one of the under-ground recesses, because the walls were so thick it would keep as cool as if in an ice-chest."

"We must bring back a bottle or two and try it," replied the prelate, "as it came from the Pope, I should prize it."

Buhler, taking the lantern and the large key that opened the door to the basement apartments, the four clergymen sallied forth.

"I wish, first, to take the measurements of the outside walls," said the prelate, "and then the length of the inside, and subtracting the one from the other, find the true thickness. Nothing like measuring for correctness," added he, although Buhler thought that he had the memorandum at his quarters in the city. "My cane is just a yard long, and has inch lines marked on it. I will now take the dimensions of this outer wall." This he did with care, Buhler holding the light, and the other two looking on.

"The night is the best time to do this, for I'd just as lief not be seen," observed the prelate, in a low voice to Buhler.

"Yes, your Grace," replied Buhler; "not a soul can see us here."

"I find the length just fifty-five feet, six inches," said the prelate, a few minutes later, as he made a note of it.

Notwithstanding Buhler's opinion, a pair of eyes were intently watching every movement of the Archbishop and his associates. The eyes belonged to Mr. Clamp, who having recently engaged in some law-breaking affair, under Mrs. Ranney's auspices, had been apprehended, but escaped the officers, preferring "to roam a tramp, rather than rot in jail," as he

expressed it. He was at this time snugly hidden behind the hawthorn hedge, opposite the wing, and could see and hear everything that transpired. He was puzzled to decide what they were doing, and concluded that it concerned the more safe imprisonment of refractory nuns.

Meanwhile, crickets chirped, katy-dids debated, and mosquitoes, in piping chorus, pursued their bloody warfare, making the clergy decry the foliage which gave them shelter, and hasten to get into cooler regions, where they could not molest.

Buhler unlocked the ponderous door, thickly studded with nails, the prelate noting it, and as he went down the stairs leading to the basement, said,—

“Have that door left open, my son. We must ventilate. The dank, unhealthy air comes sweeping up, as if there was a draught somewhere.”

The door was accordingly left ajar, with a block of wood placed in the opening, to keep the strong spring from shutting it. As they entered the Tombs, Buhler said with a shudder,—

“The music teacher, Sister Estelle, is here somewhere, if she is living.”

“Yes,” returned the prelate. “I recall, we consigned her to cell Number Nine. She doubtless departed this life several days ago, and Hosea has deposited her in her niche.”

“He did so, and I certified that she was dead,” volunteered Pecci, with a chilly tremor, then added,

"but somehow, to-night, I have a horror of dead bodies."

"I never knew any one hurt by them," remarked Krafts, coolly.

"Now for the measuring," interrupted the prelate, and the light being held, he soon had the figures fifty feet, six inches. "That makes the wall five feet thick, and where the niches are, it must be seven feet. Can that be?" he asked.

"That is doubtless correct," affirmed the astute committee, but the prelate doubted, and they had quite a parley over it.

Meanwhile, unknown to them, there was a sudden tempest of wind that sent the clouds scurrying up from a bank of vapor near the sea, warning the fugitive behind the hedge that he must seek shelter. He was in a new dilemma, as he expected every moment that the clergy would issue forth, and confront him, if he moved away from the hedge. He had been trained in a parochial school, had fallen in with bad priests and judged all by those he knew. He especially held a grudge against the prelate. He was, from his youth, accustomed to crime, and ever blindly rushed deeper in. The large drops of rain began to fall, and the tempest still increasing, drove him from his covert, and in passing the door ajar, he quickly removed the block of wood, took the key, and sped around to the side of the veranda away from the force of the storm.

Clamp felt bitter ; his marred life was a failure. He hated the pretension of religion ; had no faith in the clergy, and from the door being open, judged that they were alone, and, led on by the Archbishop, were plotting something evil. Hence, to get shelter for himself, and give them a taste of their own medicine, he shut them in. A piece of wrong doing by no means equal in enormity to their own, in confining helpless nuns in solitary cells, to pine away and die. As the block of wood was taken away, a great gust, helped by the springs, shut the door with a slam, that made the Tombs ring, as if an earthquake had commenced operations.

“Great Hercules !” cried the prelate, aghast with terror, as he heard the great door clang. “What has happened ? Buhler, have you the key ?”

“I left it in the door, your Grace,” was the frightened reply.

“You did ! The saints preserve us !” cried the old prelate, ashy pale. “We ’ve got to stay here till doomsday, for naught I can see. Now we Jesuits are all here, there ’ll be no one to condemn nuns, and no hope of the door ever being opened.”

“Oh ! oh !” groaned Pecci, sinking down in a swoon.

“I move that we try hallooing,” proposed Krafts, determined to put a bold face on the matter. “All together, now, as loud as thunder !” But while he gave the initiative, the rest remained silent.

"It is of no use," replied Buhler. "See these massive walls. If a hundred men with stentorian lungs should halloo here, not the least sound would escape outside."

"We are fairly caught in our own trap," added the Archbishop in despair. "It is a bad omen. We are worse off than the Pope in the Vatican, and were overtaken when planning conquests too. Is there no other than that door by which we entered?"

"None whatever, your Grace," replied Buhler; "but the cells open one from the other." They then explored them, Buhler leading with the lantern.

"If we could get at that wine, we could restore Father Pecci," said Krafts.

The far corner room, however, where it was stored, was locked, and they had to relinquish the idea, and endure this added affliction.

They were a sorry looking company, as they came back to the larger apartment of wall-niches, where the mortal remains of apostate nuns were supposed to repose in a standing attitude, and where indeed they would have been, had not Hosea interfered, and kind, helpful hands provided a better fate.

Pecci began to groan and move feebly, asking, "Where am I? What has happened?"

"We are next door to purgatory," replied the old prelate, crustily. Then in a tragic whisper to Buhler and Krafts, with an expressive grimace, "The decaying bodies make the air fearfully foul."

"Yes," rejoined Buhler, "it is very offensive," putting his handkerchief to his nose.

"I can't stand this charnal house long," added Krafts, in disgust.

"Saint Christopher!" cried the prelate. "Lead the way into the room adjacent. I tell you, brethren, if you'll help me out of this misery, I will insure you all the money you want."

"Just now I'd rather be sure of my life, than to have ever so much money," returned Krafts, bitterly. "It was to favor your Grace that we came here, you remember."

"Yes," the Archbishop replied; "and I shall foot the bills if we ever get free. But is n't there some weak place in the walls, a window or something of the kind?"

"No, your Grace, there is not. This place was not made to live in, but to die in. It is simply a large morgue, and we came here to take measurements, and make another as near like it as possible," added Buhler, peevishly.

"Well, what's the harm?" asked his Grace.

"If this had not been made, we had not been in it," replied Krafts, sharply. "I would vote to have it reconstructed if I was safely out. What a fuss we should make if Protestants had like places of punishment for a class of their young women."

"Hush, my son. The church sees fit to have stern discipline. It is the only way we have of keeping

together. Recant, or, be consigned to the Inquisition was the decree when we had temporal power. We have not changed our principles in the least. We are infallible, inexorable, and everything and everybody must succumb to our rule."

"Old proverbs keep running through my mind: 'With what measure ye meet, it shall be measured to you again,' 'And he that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity,' and seems to me that judgment has overtaken us," complained Buhler, brokenly, as he remembered his brief fit of repentance.

"I am sorry that this dreadful place of dead nuns' bones was ever invented for us to fall into," wailed Pecci, as he became painfully conscious.

"It is n't strange, my sons, that you are tempted of the devil, in the circumstances," remarked the prelate, wisely. "Now, if you three will only do this one favor for me, I will at once absolve you from all sin, present and future. All three lie down, close together, and let me use you for a mattress. It will cure my rheumatism, and give my aching bones a little rest."

"Your Grace must be joking," replied Krafts. "I do not feel equal to it." He most heartily disliked the Archbishop, because he was Irish, and Buhler indulged the same prejudice.

"I beg to say that I could not lie still enough," cried Buhler, proudly. "Here is an iron bedstead; it served the nuns."

“I am too sick for anything; I can't make a bed for myself,” groaned Pecci.

“Ingrates! you astonish me beyond expression,” frowned his Grace. “You deny me this favor. You do not do as you would be done by.”

“No, we never do,” replied Buhler, “or we should not have built this old sepulchre. While our light lasts, we may as well go through the cells and look at the bedsteads. To allay hunger we must sleep all we can.”

“Light lasts!” echoed the prelate. “Is there danger of its going out?” as he pictured the horrors of dungeon darkness.

“The oil in the lantern will last only a few hours, and as soon as we arrange for sleeping, we must put it out, for use another night,” was Buhler's grave reply.

In examining the three cells, three bedsteads were found, with very scant bedding. It was proposed to give the Archbishop one in the largest room, and have the trio divide the other two. But the prelate declared that he would have the middle room, as the foul niches were in the larger, and Pecci should sleep with him. As he was a large man, and the bed was single, Pecci's only alternative was to sleep on the floor, near the prelate, who wanted often to put his hand out and be sure he was there, being as timid as a child in the dark. Buhler and Krafts decided to occupy the room Number Nine, and share the bed by turns.

A company of Christ's disciples would have had the uplifting joy and comfort of a prayer-meeting, but these benighted men, although in direst need, did not know how to prevail with God. They could say prayers, as did the false prophets of old, when they cried from morning till night, "O Baal, hear us! O Baal, hear us!" and there was none that regarded, for the reason that it was not prayer directed to God. The class here represented prayed to the Virgin, but had no answer, and restlessly tossed on their hard beds, bemoaning their fate. The light had to be put out to save the oil, and the pitchy gloom of those cellar rooms, was like Egyptian darkness, that could be felt.

The situation was favorable for the development of special individual infirmities. The poor prelate was hungry, thirsty, frightened, and cross; Buhler constantly harped on the Archbishop's stupidity in getting them into this plight; Krafts was fretful when awake, and talking excitedly when asleep; and miserable little Pecci was of small use to the prelate, as he was liable to faint at any moment. The Archbishop made it his duty to disturb the trio as much as he could, and that was more than enough, they were all agreed. His constitutional timidity made him the slave of his fears.

"Krafts, my son, be so kind as to light the lantern; I must know what the time is."

Buhler pinched Krafts, which meant that he was to pretend to be asleep.

“I say, halloo, you Buhler. I want that lamp lighted. I’ve the crick in my back.”

But Buhler was deaf to his call.

He then addressed Pecci,—

“Come, my son, get right up and rub my back.”

Pecci could not pretend to be asleep, for the prelate’s hand was on his shoulder, but he demurred, saying,—

“Please, your Grace, I am so faint, that I cannot stand ; all I can do is to lie here.”

Vainly pleading for a light, and chattering garrulously, to keep himself company, the Archbishop was at length obliged to succumb to sleep.

Mr. Clamp had the veranda all to himself. As the storm soon ceased, nothing disturbed him till the dawn, when his first thought was to turn the key in the door, and set the clergy free, but bitter memories of his dwarfed and garbled training under Jesuits decided him that one night’s imprisonment was not penance enough for the grave offence of which they were guilty. He therefore hid the key where he could easily find it, as he planned to appear the next night and watch the progress of events. Stealthily withdrawing behind the hedge, he sought the highway, and a place to get his morning meal, and while enjoying breakfast at a farmer’s substantial board, he was suddenly arrested, and taken in charge by the officers who were on his track.

Not one of the clerical party knew when morning

came. It was indeed nearly dawn when they fell into their fitful slumbers. About noon the Archbishop made such an outcry, that all were aroused, and Buhler asked,—

“What can we do for your Grace?”

“Up, up! every soul of you, this instant! Strike a light, and come to me!” was the irritable rejoinder.

Buhler was soon at the suffering prelate’s side with the lantern.

“All here?” he asked. “Well, I want each of you to rub me. I am stiff with rheumatism, and cannot turn over to save my life. Here, you Buhler, hold the light with your left hand, and rub me with your right hand.”

Buhler obeyed the prelate, who groaned with every breath.

“Krafts, rub my back and side. Oh, oh! And you, Pecci, may attend to my limbs.”

As they each tried to do his duty as pointed out by the invalid, he lamented, fumed, and fretted, as if he were the only unfortunate man in the world. Finally, with the help of his friends, he was able to rise and sit up on the side of the bed, where he bewailed his lot, because he had neither wine, cigars, or breakfast.

“What destitution! What poverty! Who would have prophesied that I, Archbishop Bland of this great diocese, could become so utterly distraught! I have money, but it cannot help me. Alas! alas! that our desolation should come as in a moment.”

Things moved on in this way for six lingering horrible days and nights, the clerical party sitting in the dark to save oil. They were fearfully hungry, and suffered also greatly from thirst.

“Oh, for a drink of water!” was the oft-repeated cry.

Finally, overpowered with hunger and thirst, the Archbishop cried in his desperation,—

“Oh, Buhler, my son, light the lantern. I’ve a communication to make. Brethren, come nearer.”

Then as the light was brought, and the trembling clergy gathered around him, as if he were about to give up the ghost, he said, wringing his hands, with groans and cries,—

“We are doomed to stay here till we die of starvation. Who can endure dying by inches? It is my advice that we all commit suicide, and be done with it.”

“Not yet,” replied Buhler, gloomily, unready to face the king of terrors. “We shall die soon enough; we are getting weaker every day.”

“I would not dare kill myself,” said poor Pecci, “and I don’t want anybody to do the job for me.”

“While there is life there is hope,” added Krafts, more cheerfully. “There may be help for us yet; life is a gift of God, and we have no right to take it away forcibly. I have done some hard thinking since I have been here. It has helped me to recall my talks with the bishop. I heard him say, ‘In the day of trouble call on God, not commit sin.’”

"We've been praying ever since this calamity happened," groaned the Archbishop.

"Yes," rejoined Krafts; "but it is my mind that we have applied to the wrong one for help. The bishop says, 'Call upon God in the day of trouble, not upon Mary.'"

At this there was a great hush, and Krafts went on,—

"Now, as to what to do in our distress: I suppose we might cut strips from our shoes and chew on the leather. This would start the saliva, and we should not suffer so much from thirst. Father Buhler, let's to work. I have a sharp knife; if you'll hold the light, I'll cut strips of leather for lunch."

Each one had pieces cut from his own shoe, and soon all were busy chewing the hard morsel which occupied them, and gave some relief from thirst.

There was a heap of straw in the corner of the large room; Krafts and Buhler looked it over and found a measure of kernels of wheat and oats. This they doled out, a handful to each, which was received with tearful acclamations and gratitude. It was nourishment, and they all began to take courage.

In a further search, Buhler and Krafts found a movable partition in one of the rooms, and still exploring, at length discovered a faucet, rusted almost beyond recognition. With difficulty turning it, they soon had water flowing freely, to their great joy, and speedily drank their fill, the most welcome quaffing

in their lives, despite the rusty dipper. Quickly filling his hat with the precious liquid, Buhler gave the lantern to Krafts, and made his way to the prelate and Pecci. His Grace was not fastidious, but eagerly drank and drank, and then Pecci took his turn.

“Don’t you see how soon we were helped when we prayed to the Almighty?” triumphantly cried Krafts. “Now we shall not starve for a long time, according to Dr. Tanner, whose champion boast is, that men can live on water longer than they can on wine.”

“I doubt that,” replied the prelate. “There is a great deal of strength in wine. It maketh the heart of man to rejoice.”

“The doctor can prove what he says,” was the reply. “At any rate, water is half the battle in sustaining life.”

The grand effects of nature’s nectar were shortly felt by all. There was a general brightening up, and if the prelate had any temptations to relapse into utter despair and commit suicide, he kept them to himself.

XXVI.

Bewildered.

AFTER Mrs. Byington had made known her plans to Mrs. Leavenworth, the next thing in order was to gain over her daughter Louise to join with her in executing them.

This required all the tact of the mother. Louise had been absent visiting a friend for a few days, and when she returned one evening, she threw herself into an easy chair quite depressed, exclaiming,—

“How I do miss the rector!. It is so lonely here; it seems as if everybody was gone when he is away!”

“The doctor would say that you are morbid, from not being in perfect health,” was the reply. “I am ailing, too, and he says the sooner I go abroad the better!”

“I hope you won't think of it!” rejoined Louise, decidedly. “Better stay here, and take care of the estate.”

“Take care of it!” replied the mother. “I find

that I can do that better by going away. I am told that I am liable to lose it if I remain."

"Oh, mother, you must be wild," said Louise, earnestly. "Do n't you remember what the rector said, that you and I could only secure our property by joining a convent, and giving it in charge of the church, as so many others have done."

"Now, dear," replied Mrs. Byington, "you see I do not rely on what cousin John says, because I have discovered that he is secretly bound by the Jesuit's oath, to work every way for the Roman power. I learned, too, that his Order is utterly false and faithless in every respect. You've only to read "The Doctrine of the Jesuits" to find that a plain fact. This being the case, his view is like that of the most grasping of all worldly organizations, the Roman Catholic Church; and it has not one particle of weight with me. I certainly shall not be scared into giving my estate into the hands of any beggar, — least of all to one made rich for so many ages by every species of swindling fraud. I shall sell my real estate in this place, and take you abroad with me. Some of our relatives are in France, and some in Italy. We will select a desirable place in which to live, and you can go on with your education, which Madame Du Pont so sadly neglected.

"Oh, mother!" cried the young lady, influenced by her superstitious enthusiasm, "I have no heart to

study, and I do not want to go to Europe! I only care to join a convent."

"It would do us both a world of good to go," said the fond mother; "and I see no other way out of this difficulty that cousin John has disclosed. If, as he says, all the wealth of heretics is to be confiscated, just the moment it can be done, and that we are on the eve of that time, we do well to go to some foreign country that has freed herself from the Papal yoke."

"Well, mamma, I might as well confess to you that I have given myself and all that I possess to the church. He made the matter so clear, I could do no less, and I told the rector so; and he said no matter what happened I was sure of heaven, for it was a lovely sacrifice, and most acceptable to Mary and all the saints."

"But, dear child," replied Mrs. Byington, "this place is to be sold, and even if the Romish Church gets the power she seeks, we can be safe from her reach. As to your promise, as you are a minor, he had no right to persuade you, and you will find untold sorrow, if you persist in this foolish plan. Think the matter over calmly, darling; go with me to Europe, and if you are still of the same mind, I shall not stand in your way further than this, that not one cent of your father's estate shall you have to give to a convent! And if you enter a convent as a poor girl, you will be only a scrub and menial."

“ I have made a vow, and a dreadful curse will follow me if I go back ! ” cried Louise, tremblingly. “ I promised the rector that I would join next communion, and I can only go forward.”

“ And leave your poor mother,” brokenly said Mrs. Byington.

“ He said if you were sensible, you would join, too, as it is the only way we can make sure of heaven, and of our earthly possessions.”

“ Darling, let me tell you that he is entirely mistaken.”

“ I am sure that he is not ! ” replied Louise, greatly excited. “ He knows more about it than we do ! I am fully settled as to that.”

Mrs. Byington, seeing that it was useless to reason with her child while in this mood, was silent, and in her extremity lifted her heart to God in prayer for help.

After tea some friends came in to spend the evening, and Louise played and sang as usual. She was a sweet singer and skilful accompanist ; and at bedtime, mother and daughter, after a good-night kiss, retired to their rooms for rest, each strong in her own opinion that her view was right.

Louise spent a sleepless night, tossed with doubts and fears. What to do, she knew not ; but finally concluded to keep her vow, since, if neglected, it would be at the peril of her soul.

At breakfast her mother cheerily said, “ Now,

daughter, I am going to commence packing my things to-day, and I would be glad if you would attend to yours, and if you get in a hard place, and need my help, just let me know, for I am an accomplished hand at the business."

"Yes, mamma," was the absent reply, and as the mother plunged into the work of packing her wardrobe, the child went to her room and wrote her a farewell note, with many tears, and donning her wraps made her way to the nearest convent, as soon as possible to join an Order, and to lead the life of a holy recluse.

Mrs. Byington had her mind much exercised that morning about the lack of reliability of Irish servants, and as she was packing, and Bridget was helping her, she thought she would sound her a little.

"Bridget," said she, as she went on folding dresses, and laying them away, "Can your priest sin?"

"Never a bit, mum," was the reply. "No matter what he does, it's howly, 'cause he can forgive himself as he goes along."

"Bridget, if Father Buhler told you to poison Louise and me, would you do it?"

"I would, mum," quickly replied Bridget. "I'd be a haythan not to do it, bein' as Father Buhler is howly, and all he says is like the voice of God."

"You'd do it, would you?"

"I would, mum, as soon as convaynient," said Bridget, as unconcerned as if saying her catechism. "But he's niver said it."

“ Well, Bridget, that’s enough,” said Mrs. Byington. “ Stop packing for me, and put up your things ; come and take your pay and be off. I shall never hire anyone that is ready to murder, if a priest tells her to.”

When, a half-hour later, Bridget appeared to get her wages, Mrs. Byington said, as she paid her,—

“ I am very sorry to part with you in this way, Bridget, for I had hoped better things of you. Now I want you to promise me one thing, and that is, that you will not try to hire out in a Protestant family.”

“ But I ’ll have to do as the priest says, mum,” replied Bridget, “ and he always says, ‘ Bridget, be sure you get wark with the Protestants.’ Them bez our orders, and, mum, if you ’ll be after giving me a recommend, I ’ll be much obliged to you.”

It struck Mrs. Byington as very amusing for Bridget to expect to get an indorsement from her, when she was turned away, and she replied,—

“ If I say anything about you, I must tell the truth.”

“ Yes, mum,” said the woman. “ No matter what you say, if it’s a recommend.”

Mrs. Byington wrote as follows,—

“ This certifies that Bridget Murray is strong and willing to work. She is a rigid Catholic, and I hereby dismiss her because I do not believe in her priest, who is a Jesuit. Bridget thinks that he can-

not sin. I know that he did not reprove her when she confessed to him that she stole from me. She is not as much to be blamed as her priest, but I do not consider that she can be safely harbored in a Protestant family as a cook, as she declares herself ready to give poison if the priest should say that it must be done. She could, I think, be trusted to work for her own people.

“(Signed)

MRS. BYINGTON.”

Bridget did not ask to have it read, and armed with her “recommend,” started out into the world as light-hearted as ever. Mrs. Byington was relieved to have her depart; having lately missed several valuable articles of wearing apparel, she had lost all confidence in her. She had accomplished a good morning’s work, and, near dinner-time, seeking Louise in her room, found her absent, and a tear-stained epistle lying on her table,—

“DEAR MAMMA,—Do not grieve, for I must be true to my vow, or I shall be lost.

“YOUR LOUISE.”

“Gone! gone into a convent!” the mother cried. “Oh, my only one, how could you? Oh, blind infatuation! now indeed I have retribution for sending her to a Catholic school for accomplishments. I have my reward for allowing cousin Van Allstyn to plan for me, and influence her. Oh, my Father, help, help!” and she sank on her knees in an agony of prayer for her child. As she wept and prayed and

made her confession and resolution, it seemed that an angel came to strengthen her, and she grew more hopeful. She decided to go and see Grace Leavenworth, and consult what to do. She knew that she was now at the Aid Rooms for the day, as important business was to be done. When Grace learned Mrs. Byington's trouble, her heart overflowed with sympathy.

"Oh, what a pity!" she cried. "Louise knows so little what she is doing in joining a convent. Where has she gone?"

"I can only conjecture," replied Mrs. Byington; "It must be to Madonna Hall."

"I really hope it is," was the reply, "for that is being entirely changed. The Directors are not receiving any more nuns, but dismissing and finding places for those remaining there, as the Order is dissolved."

"I am delighted to hear it," said Mrs. Byington, "and if we find darling Louise, all may yet be well. This must be the work of God, this starting reform in the church itself."

"I cannot doubt it," was the reply; "but it is a coming out and leaving the abominations behind. The Spirit of the Lord is moving and the civilization of the age demands it."

"I will send a messenger home for the carriage, if you will go with me in search of my precious child," said Mrs. Byington.

"I will gladly go," replied Grace, "as what more I

have to do I can accomplish on my return. Ella Southbury keeps her part so well done. She is a jewel of a secretary."

To return to the would-be nun. The night before had been almost sleepless. It is true that this was partly owing to the scapular and serge vest which, by way of penance, she had commenced wearing next her skin. The latter irritated her nerves until she was nearly beside herself. It disturbed her morbid enthusiasm as she tried to mumble popish prayers to the Virgin, St. Joseph and other saints, according to the Catholic instruction book which the rector had secretly given her.

In the morning she was obliged, much against her darkened conscience, to remove the goading garment, although retaining the scapular, and resolved at once to consign herself for further safety to the walls of the nearest convent, that she might make no mistake in her prescribed round of religious observances.

Having tearfully written her note, she sent for a hack, and in due time reached Madonna Hall.

Ringing the bell, she asked to see the Superioress, for whom she had the most unbounded reverence. When the new bride came in, and found that her caller was Miss Byington, the cousin of Miss Leavenworth and of Rector Van Allstyn, and that she had come to offer herself to the convent, she was deeply moved, and invited her into the small parlor for a confidential chat.

Then taking a seat on the sofa beside her, in a genial, loving way she entered into conversation to win her confidence, and soon asked,—

“Now, my dear, will you tell me why you wish to join a convent?”

“I thought it was the only thing I could do, feeling as I did,” replied Louise, frankly. “You see, I could not be a good Catholic and remain at home. My dear mother has lost the little faith she once had in it.”

“How came you to think of it?” asked the lady.

“Rector Van Allstyn has urged it for some time; otherwise I do n't suppose I should have thought of it.”

“What reasons did he give? How did he persuade you?”

“Oh, he said it was just lovely for a young lady to join a convent. She would then be quite sure of salvation. A convent, he said, was so improving and restful. It was almost heaven itself; there was so much harmony. Oh, I cannot begin to tell you how he painted it, but from his description I have ever since longed to become a nun. Besides assuring me the salvation of my soul, he said it was the best place for me to secure my property.”

“He is utterly mistaken!” returned the lady, warmly. “I know, and I warn you that a convent is not the place for your soul's good, or for the security of your property. Now I am going to show you a poem on this subject that is in point. The bishop,

knowing my love for poetry, when he returned from Europe brought me Bonar's 'Hymns of the Morning,' and a volume of his miscellaneous poems, among which last I find what I will now read," and she produced from her book-rack,—

THE NUN'S AWAKENING.

"This is no heaven!

And yet they told me that all heaven was here,
This life the foretaste of a life more dear;

That all beyond this convent cell
Was but a fairer hell;

That all was ecstasy and song within,
That all without was tempest, gloom and sin.

Ah me, it is not so,
This is no heaven, I know.

"This is not rest!

And yet they told me that all rest was here,
Within these walls the medicine and the cheer

For broken hearts; that all without
Was trembling, weariness and doubt;

This the sure ark that floats above the wave,
Strong in life's flood to shelter and to save;

This the still mountain lake,
Which minds can never shake.

Ah me, it is not so,
This is not rest, I know!

"This is not home!

And yet for this I left my girlhood's bower,
Shook the first dew from April's budding flower,

Cut off my golden hair,
Forsook the dear and fair,
And fled, as from a serpent's eyes,
Home and its holiest charities;

Broke the sweet ties that God had given,
 And sought to win His heaven
 By leaving home-work all undone,
 The home-race all unrun,
 The fair home-garden all untilled,
 The home affections all unfilled ;
 As if these common rounds of work and love
 Were drags to one whose spirit soared above
 Life's tame and easy circle, and who fain
 Would earn her crown by self-taught toil and pain.
 Led captive by a mystic power,
 Dazzled by visions in the moody hour,
 When, sick of earth, and self, and vanity,
 I longed to be alone or die.
 Mocked by my own self-brooding heart,
 And plied with every wile and art
 That could seduce a young and yearning soul
 To start for some mysterious goal,
 And seek, in cell, or savage waste,
 The cure of blighted hope and love misplaced.
 Ah me, it is not so,
 This is not home, I know !

“ This is not light !

And yet they told me that all light was here, —
 Light of the holier sphere ;
 That through this lattice seen,
 Clearer and more serene,
 The clear stars ever shone,
 Shining for me alone ;
 And the bright moon more bright,
 Seen in the lone blue night
 By ever-watchful eyes,
 The sun of convent skies.
 Ah me, it is not so,
 This is not light, I know !

“ This is not love !

And yet they told me that all love was here,
Sweetening the silent atmosphere ;

All green, without a faded leaf,
All smooth, without a fret, or cross, or grief,
Fresh as young May,
Yet calm as autumn's softest day ;
No balm like convent air,
No hues of paradise so fair !
A jealous, peevish, hating world beyond,
Within, life's loveliest bond ;
Envy and discord in the haunts of men,
Here, Eden's harmony again.
Ah me, it is not so,
Here is no love, I know !

“ Here is no balm

For stricken hearts, no calm
For fevered souls, no cure
For minds diseased. The impure
Become impurer in this stagnant air ;
My cell becomes my tempter and my snare,
And vainer dreams than ere I dreamed before,
Crowd in at its low door ;
And have I fled, my God, from thee,
From Thy glad love and liberty,
And left the road where blessings fell like light,
For self-made by-paths shaded o'er with night ?
Oh, lead me back, my God,
To the forsaken road,
Life's common beat, that there,
Even in the midst of toil and care,
I may find Thee,
And in Thy love be free ! ”

XXVII.

A. Song in the Heart.

THE lady read well, for her heart was in the theme, and, meanwhile, tears coursed down the cheeks of poor Louise, as she saw the castle of her superstitious day-dreams vanish away.

“Can it be that this is so?” she cried, as Madame Clarissima, having finished the poem, affectionately put her arm around her, as she sat beside her on the sofa.

“It is a true picture, saving that some of the deformity is veiled,” was the grave reply. “These religious houses differ somewhat, but all fail to give what they promise. My lot has been a happy one, compared with most nuns, I suppose, but I would give worlds if I could undo the false record of my wasted life and lost opportunities; especially do I mourn over my cruelty in discipline, when I verily thought I was doing God service. This institution, I learn, has been better managed than many, yet we find, as the most intelligent Catholics in Europe allow, that the Protes-

tant methods of education are vastly superior to the conventual."

"Is it possible?" asked Louise, the scales falling from her eyes.

"It is surely so," replied the lady. "Do you know, my dear girl, that I have had a great awakening, and by the Word of God and the bishop's help, I find that many of our former religious performances are simply cloaks for sin. Observances which bring in money; doctrines which are only swindling schemes to enrich the church and the clergy, are the strength of the false system which the bishop and I gladly forsake. I am utterly disgusted with the entire sham, and myself and husband are strongly witnessing against its abominations, being, by the grace of God, free from its galling and degrading chain."

"You surprise me more than I can tell!" exclaimed Louise. "I had come to think the ceremonies of the Catholic Church very beautiful. I liked so many holidays, the show and parade of the worship; the fine music and chanting, and the doctrine that the priest can forgive sin, pleased me most of all. You have not given up that yet, I hope. We are told to confess to the priest."

"The Roman Church has such a rule, but the Word of God tells us to confess to God, who says, 'If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.'"

"I thought it was easier to confess to the priest," murmured Louise,

“That is not the doctrine of God, but the doctrine of devils. The priest has no business with your secrets. If he is a bad man, he will be sure to try and take advantage of his knowledge.”

“I am dreadfully disappointed that you see reason to renounce your religion. It makes me feel almost as if there were no true religion,” moaned Louise.

“Ah, my dear girl, you must remember that where there is a counterfeit, there is a true religion. Jesus, the one Lord, is the all-sufficient Saviour and Redeemer. No other name can save.”

Louise was overwhelmed with the words of the lady.

“But what shall I do? I have made a vow, and must I not keep it?”

“Not if you vowed ignorantly,” was the reply, “and were persuaded by another. A reckless promise is better broken than kept. What does your dear mother advise?”

“She has no more faith in the Catholic Church than you have, and wishes me to accompany her in a journey.”

“An excellent plan,” replied the lady; “I can think of nothing better. Let me tell you, if you are so happy as to have a good mother, by all means keep under her wing as long as possible. She will not do you evil, but good, all the days of her life. I am hoping that convents are soon to be suppressed, or remodeled; pruned of priestly management, and made into elevating female seminaries. We plan

to turn this into an educational institution of a higher grade, like the best in the country, and as we lead off in making a change, I trust the conventual system will soon pass away in this land, as it is fading in Europe."

"I want to ask you a few questions," thoughtfully said Louise. "Cousin John Van Allstyn declared that it was not safe for me to listen to those that spoke against the holy Catholic Church. He said it was anathema to one who listens to heretics. What do you say?"

"The holy Catholic Church is a very different thing from the church that covers up iniquity, and gets rich by giving leave to sin, and by the false doctrines of the scapular, penance, relics, and that dreadful abomination, the mass. Those who love the Lord, and do His will, make up the true church."

"Is it safe for me to read the Bible alone?"

"Yes, by all means. It is your Father speaking to you. Let no one come between you and your best Friend. The bishop and I read the Bible every day, and wonder how we ever lived without it. The words of Jesus are, 'Search the Scriptures.' How can you obey Him, if you do not dare to read them?"

"It now seems so different hearing you talk," said Louise. "I believe, as mother said, that cousin John influenced me. He made the church, as he called it, look very attractive, and I felt as if I must join it or be lost."

“More likely you would be lost if you did join it,” was the rejoinder. “It has no saving ordinances. Its mass, on which it prides itself, is full of blasphemy. Oh, you can never know how I have suffered at the thought of my life so empty and sinful in listening to vain repetitions as the heathen do; so full of pride, self-sufficiency, good works and idolatry. But now that my eyes are opened, and I have received the dear Saviour, I cannot find words to praise Him. He is tender, compassionate, and invites you to come. I want you, dear, to give your heart to Him this moment. It is only look and live; only sweetly consent for Him to rule your life. Will you not give Him your heart?” and she gently and lovingly sheltered her in her arms, and Louise burst into tears, saying,—

“I do not see how I can refuse loving Him. It seems so easy, and His burden does look so light. Oh, dear friend, I believe I came here to hear of the Saviour. I do not care who opposes me, I have found peace; I am the Lord’s, and He is mine.”

Madame Clarissima shed tears of joy, saying,—

“Truly has salvation come to this house. Some of the sisters have lately found the Lord. They have long been groping for light, and are so happy. There, do you hear them singing those sweet hymns?” as a strain was borne into the window. “This is getting to be the very house of prayer, and the gate of heaven. And, do you know, we are so much indebted

to the bishop's nephew, Hosea; he has been living near the Lord for years, and I did not dream of it till recently, although he seemed saintly. His experience has been so helpful to the bishop and me. It has been in our prayer meetings like having one among us anointed of the Holy One, most blessed. And this is not all, — Miss Grace Leavenworth has been like an angel of mercy to me, and Rev. Mr. Cameron has been often closeted with the bishop, and has opened the way so wonderfully to him, for you must know that the traditions and superstitions of Rome have so obstructed it that there was no passing. We were in darkness as it regarded the way of salvation, and now to think of it, you were almost ready to go back to the sins of the dark ages, when we were rejoicing to come out into the glorious light. And now, dear, I want to give you a printed card with some of the most glaring errors of Romanism pointed out. Mr. Cameron prepared it to help the bishop and me in our studies on the subject. We call it the 'Cameron Card.'"

It reads as follows,—

POPERY " PUTS BETWEEN."

1. Itself as mediator between heaven and earth.
2. Priest between sinner and God.
3. Auricular confession between penitent and mercy.
4. Penance between offender and godly sorrow.

5. Mass between believer and righteousness in Christ.
6. Indulgence between himself and self-denial.
7. Tradition between him and Scripture.
8. Purgatory between him and Heaven.
9. Celibacy between priest and home.
10. Good works between believer and justification.
11. Extreme unction between him and death.
12. Saints and Virgin Mary between him and a prayer-hearing God.

As the earnest lady handed Louise a copy of this digest of Anti-Christ errors, she said,—

“Now, dear, there it is in a nut-shell, altogether opposed to the Word, which teaches us “to turn from idols to serve the living God, and wait for His Son from heaven.”

Just at this point Mrs. Byington and Grace Leavenworth were announced, and ushered in. Madame Clarissima warmly received them, and Louise fell on her mother's neck with tears of joy, saying,—

“I see things as you do now, mother dear, and my heart has found rest.” She then in a few words told how Madame Clarissima had helped her out of her darkness.

“It is wonderful! wonderful! cried Mrs. Byington. “I am receiving you anew as one that was lost, my darling child, and you are, if possible, dearer to me than ever. It is of Him who alone answers prayer.”

“Oh, mother dear, you will forgive me for leaving and grieving you so dreadfully. I was in a great strait,” cried Louise.

“Yes, indeed, darling, you are wholly forgiven, and I see that good is to be brought out of it. The sorrow led me to the Lord in especial nearness, and I promised Him, if He would restore you to me, that I would give myself to His service renewedly all the days of my life.”

“You did! and does that mean that you will not go abroad?” exclaimed Louise.

“Oh, no, darling. It means that I shall go, and with my going, plan to do all the good in my power. You will go with me, will you not?”

“With all my heart,” was the glad answer. “Whither thou goest, I will go; thy God shall be my God, and naught but death shall part us.”

“What a comfort you are, darling Louise; you ought to be called Ruth,” cried the happy mother.

“It is about time I was some comfort, I have been so perverse. But I am relieved and at rest now, and I cannot be thankful enough. And now, as you want to go to Europe, it seems to me the most delightful thing for me to go with you. Don’t you think so, cousin Grace?”

“Yes, indeed I do. Aside from the enjoyment and benefit of travelling and living abroad, there are now more openings than ever where Christians can influence for the right.”

“So the bishop says,” added Madame Clarissima. “He told me about the McAll Mission in Paris, with its one hundred mission places for worship. In France and in Italy, on the old persecuting ground, the Bible is scattered freely, and churches are built. He says that earnest Protestants are needed wherever they visit or reside, to help on the good work.

“That’s just what I am going to do,” brightly said Mrs. Byington. “I am not going abroad to please myself, or to be idle, tramp-like, but I am going heartily as unto the Lord, as I agreed when I was in trouble.”

“Well, my heart is so full,” exclaimed Louise, “that I feel as if I should want to do lots of singing and, if need be, will take charge of the music in the first mission chapel where we chance to reside. How sweetly those nuns sing!” as a melodious refrain was borne in at the open window.

No one dreamed of the desolate clerical party groaning in misery in the Tombs, where no human voice could reach their ears. There, sound was barred out, as well as barred in.

“Yes,” said Madame Clarissima, in reply to Louisa’s remark, “many of them sing for very gladness. It is a most wonderful change, and came from the faithfulness of Christian workers.”

“Yes,” rejoined Grace, “we read, ‘He gave to every one his work.’ They are happy who find their work, and faithfully do it.”

The callers had successfully accomplished what they sought ; had found the bewildered one in her right mind, and after joining the nuns in a joyful song, they left Madonna Hall with kind wishes from their hostess and her companions, Louise saying, as she took her seat in the carriage beside Grace and her mother,—

“I am so happy! Who would have thought that I could be so contented to leave a place which I imagined the only safe refuge !”

XXVIII.

Into the Light.

THE next morning after the reception, as Madame Clarissima was passing from the parlor into the hall, she noticed the Archbishop's light overcoat hanging on the hat-tree, and wondered that he did not take it away with him to his room at the monastery. When Father Williams came in to conduct devotions, in reply to questions of the lady, he said that the Archbishop, and Fathers Pecci and Krafts had not returned to their accustomed lodgings; he supposed that they had taken an early train for some resort or clerical gathering. He would call at Father Buhler's place in the city and make inquiries. Although it was mysterious that they remained away so long without a word of explanation, no one dreamed that they were suffering the dread horrors of starvation in the Madonna Hall dungeons.

"It must be," said Father Williams, as he conferred with Madame Clarissima and his wife, "that

some new enterprise is on foot, that will surprise us all!"

Events, however, swept on without the aid of the afflicted clerical party. Louise Byington came to Madonna Hall, learned a life lesson, and left, rejoicing. The sisters, unmolested, attended Hosea's Bible Class, in the large parlor, with the cordial leave and help of the Superioress.

At length, after several days, Father Williams reported that Father Buhler was not at home, and as Hosea was passing through the back hall that afternoon, he missed the lantern which always hung on the nail in the corner, with Madame Clarissima's key. Both lantern and key were gone! It flashed into his mind that something was wrong, and stepping back, he entered the parlor and asked the lady what it meant. She was surprised, and charged him to go directly to the Tombs, and see if he could find any clew to the lost clergy.

Hastening to do her bidding, as he turned the massive lock, pushed the door open, and went down the stairs, he heard groans and cries pitiful enough to break a heart of stone. To describe the broken, feeble, yet tumultuous joy of the incarcerated men, as he appeared, is impossible. They were all weak with want of sleep, long fasting and anxiety. Father Pecci swooned away as usual, and the rest could scarcely stand, as one after another they were helped out into the blessed sunlight. They were a wretched com-

pany, in cut-up shoes or stocking-feet; and as they refused to be seen by Madame Clarissima and the nuns, in their filthy attire, they had comfortable seats given them in the carriage house, while Hosea went in, explained the case to the Superioress, and obtained suitable food, which they ravenously devoured, and declared it was the most delicious they ever tasted.

There was no disposition to vaunt or boast of what great things the church was doing, or was planning to do. Exhausted and depressed, they would have sold its chances for dominion at a very low figure. The three priests, bewailing their lost dignity, bitterly reproached the prelate as the means of their imprisonment. As for that dignitary, he was oppressed with a dismal sense of degradation, and could scarcely look the trio in the face, while he muttered to himself,—

“Bad omen! bad omen! Our chance has gone by!”

They regarded him, although with less reason, with something of the abhorring which the Italian people have for the pontiff who has so long heartlessly held high carnival over their best interests; for his own enlargement, devouring their vitals of education and religion all these long, mournful years. The Archbishop, Fathers Krafts and Pecci were left at the clerical quarters by Hosea; but Buhler insisted on being taken home, where good old faithful Nabby could “nurse him up and get him in working order.”

The Archbishop was cured of his enthusiastic project of building a place like the Tombs, as he was sure some evil-minded passer-by had moved the block of wood from the door, so that it was shut by the force of the strong spring. He shuddered at the thought, and preferred to keep the Sisters of All Saints' Nunnery in subjection by some other mode of punishment. He little dreamed that he suffered there by withholding from young Clamp more than was meet, in the matter of education and moral training.

When Hosea had returned from taking Father Buhler home, Madame Clarissima sent for him to call and report, feeling no little sympathy for the afflicted men. She remembered her brief sojourn in that fearful prison, with the prospect of starvation, and longed to learn how they endured it. Hosea replied that they were anxious to keep the matter quiet, lest the press reporters get hold of it. It would not do for the community to be informed respecting the place of thick walls and niches; some day, officials, armed with power, might insist on seeing what Rome dared to build in this land of the free. They had requested him to say to her, that the nuns were not to hear a word; it was to be hushed up, and kept a profound secret.

This, however, could not be done, as the sisters had heard Hosea speak of the key and lantern, and knew that the clergy were missing. They even saw them

when they came out of the Tombs, and took refuge, vagrant-like, in the carriage house, and many eyes, behind window-blinds, saw when they were driven away. While not malicious, the sisters were generally resigned to have the clergy know, by experience, what their poor condemned associates suffered, when accorded the penalty of underground bondage.

Some little time after Bridget left Mrs. Byington, armed with her certificate, which she could not read in her ignorance, she turned into the church and took her place at the confessional. Father Buhler, having recovered from the effects of his imprisonment, was in no manner improved in principles. In a hurried way she made known to him that she had left her place.

“Left your place!” cried he, in an irritated way. “What’s up?”

“It’s looking for a better place, I bez.”

“Bridget, none of that nonsense! Do n’t you dare try to deceive me. What’s that you have in your hand?” imperiously.

“It’s what the mistress give me — my recommend,” said Bridget, handing the paper to him.

As Buhler read it, and saw that he was understood by Mrs. Byington, he flushed to the eyes apprehensively, and said,—

“See here, Bridget, what have you been telling her about me?”

“Not a warrd, your riverence,” replied she, in

alarm. "I bez always saying a good warrd for yez. Does me paper say I did?"

"Yes; it says Mrs. Byington knew about your taking things, and that I did not blame you!"

"An' what business of the mistress is that? I did n't harrum her; I only bez an honest woman that wants me wages, an' if I do n't have money enough I has to make it up in taking her clothes."

"Bridget, see here, I want to know just what talk you had with Mrs. Byington about this matter?"

"I never said one warrd, till the girl, Hannah, that sleeps with me, told the mistress that I talked in my sleep, and she repeated every blessed warrd that I told you. Then Mrs. Byington was angry, and she has been hard on me ever since."

"What did you tell her?"

"I denied every warrd. I said I was apt to talk by contraries when I was asleep, and that, of course. I would not take a pin's worth from one that had been as kind to me as she had. But she kept watch, and never trusted me after that."

"Well, it is most unfortunate all round," said Buhler,— "when I was getting influence in the family. Somebody may make a row, and arrest both of us, yet. This certificate is most mischievous. You did right to bring it to me. I'll write you another, and I want you to start at once for California."

"The saints preserve me! What for?"

"I'll tell you later. You have a nice little sum in the bank, I think?"

“Yes, Father; who told you?”

“I know all about you and your affairs, so you may as well confess. How much have you?”

“I have been sendin’ money to my mother, and have only \$2,000 to me name,” was the reply.

“Very well, bring me \$500 for your soul’s repose and a holy offering, and I will see you started off for my friend’s house in Los Angeles. It is a most lovely country.”

“But, your reverence, I don’t want to go there. I left me heart in Ireland!”

“You did! Well, then, return to Ireland as soon as possible; that is the only safe place for you.”

“Yes, your reverence; I must go and see my mother before she dies. Now I am visiting my friend, Margy Collins, to rest an’ fix up my clothes. Please, your Honor, let me have my recommend that Mrs. Byington gave me.”

“No, indeed; that’s of no use!” and he threw it away, much to Bridget’s distress.

Father Buhler, seeing this, quickly wrote her another in Mrs. Byington’s name, and with the promise that she would sail for Ireland in a few days she left, not a little perplexed and agitated.

As she was on her way to her friend’s house, plodding along and talking to herself, a nice looking gentleman accosted her.

“I beg pardon,” said he, raising his hat. “Is n’t your name Bridget Murray?”

“It is that same, your Honor ; but how should you get it right ?”

“Why Bridget, Bridget ! do n't you know me ? I am your twin brother, Ralph.”

“Howly mother !” cried Bridget. “The saints be praised ! How you have changed, you that was the idol of my eyes, and once my darling little brother !”

“Bless your dear heart, sister !” returned he, brokenly ; you always were loving and kind, and I have missed you so much ! I want to say to you that there were things very wrong that I taught you when I was studying.” Bridget opened her eyes in sheer bewilderment. He then told her, in order to prepare her mind, something about the great change in Ireland in the last five years. “Once,” said he, “it was as much as a man's life was worth to be seen scattering Bibles. Now the Douay Bible is as common as any other book.”

They had now reached Maggy's home, and having been welcomed, were cosily talking in her nice parlor.

“What was it that you thought you told me wrong ?” asked Bridget.

“It was when I gave you the teaching of the Jesuits, ‘that servants may secretly steal from their masters as much as they judge their labor is worth more than the wages which they receive.’ I remember I told you that.”

“Yes, brother Ralph, and I've been faithful, and

done just as you said. I've obeyed the church and done my duty."

"Oh, Bridget! I feared that you had! But it is very sinful. God's Word says, 'Thou shalt not steal.'"

"Sure, it is not stealin' at all; it is only makin' up my wages!" returned she, warmly.

"The laws of God and the laws of the land call it stealing, and you could be arrested for it," said the brother in dismay.

"Do the laws of the land pretend to be better than the church?" asked she, with an air of triumph.

"In most things they are a great deal better, and rebuke the wickedness of the church when it is brought to light."

"Wickedness!" burst from Bridget in great consternation and wrath. "Why, it is the howly mother church. Shame on you, a priest, to talk that way."

"Bridget, hear me, because I am a priest, I know better than you the iniquity of this church, and I can stand it no longer. I leave it for Christ, whom I take for my all-sufficient Saviour."

At this Bridget began to wail and weep as if he lay dead beside her.

"Oh, my Ralph, Ralph, you are a dreadful heretic! You are going straight to purgatory. What will I do wanting my brother?" and her loud cries were distressing to hear.

Her brother said nothing, waiting for the first emotions to subside, and meanwhile looked over her certificates, —she had picked up the one thrown away by Buhler, thinking that it would help her.

Soon she stopped wailing long enough to ask, "Ralph, do tell me, do you ever pray to the Blessed Virgin?"

"No, darling; I only pray to my Creator and Redeemer, who loved me so well that He died to save me."

"Not pray to the Virgin! Oh, Ralph, she's the greatest Saviour of them all. God and Christ will turn a deaf ear without her help."

"It is not so," was the reply. "The penitent thief did not need Mary, although she stood at the foot of the cross. He called on Jesus, and was heard. Jesus is the one door, and whoever tries to come into heaven any other way will fail of eternal life."

But the poor, benighted woman, in her fear having determined not to hear anything adverse to the faith in which she had been reared, resumed her loud lamentation. Seeing he could do her no good, in her present mood, he prepared to take leave, saying that as he was to preach at Tallman Hall that evening, he must now go, and he would see her in the morning.

After he went, she calmed down as he expected, and as Margy was a Catholic who read her Bible and searched diligently if these things were so, she was

just the one to talk with Bridget, although the perverse woman seemed more angry than ever, when she found that her friend attended Protestant meetings, despite the priest. Bridget was afraid to go to hear her brother, lest Buhler find it out and change her into a rat, rabbit or some other beast, as he had threatened on one occasion. She declared that she would not go, not she, if all the world went. So after supper her friend put on her things and started out. She had not gone far, when Bridget came running after her, saying, "Stop! stop! I might as well go and take care of you. It is no worse to go to hear my brother preach than it is to abide with you over night, if you are a heretic."

They took seats where they could hear every word.

The preacher's subject was "Progress in Ireland and Italy." His was a fine type of Celtic eloquence, and as his soul was in his inspiring subject, he swayed his audience in a masterly manner. He first referred to the Word of God as the great civilizing and Christianizing power of the nations, and said that the Saviour gave his followers commandment to disciple all people by teaching His Word, that He charged them to search the Scriptures, not simply to read them,—there would be need of this close attention in order to prove what was truth. He then gave a vivid picture of the nations with the Bible, and the nations without its saving power; compared Roman Catholic

and heathen countries with Germany, England and America, showing the elevating influence of the Word of God, even when partially scattered among the masses. He referred to the great Reformation under Martin Luther, and the astonishing effects of the circulation of the Holy Scriptures. He sketched what the Word of God was now doing in Italy, where the secular press is publishing the Bible in daily issues, not as a religious movement, but because the call of the readers is in that direction and it increases the sale of the papers.

“Rome,” said he, “the seat of the Apostasy, is getting to be honey-combed with the Gospel. The papal power is dying at the head. Within a few years after Italy became independent, there were some fifty Protestant chapels in active operation, and thousands of sincere worshippers praising God for the miraculous deliverance from persecution in the city of abominations. Ah,” said the preacher, “if it had not been for Rome, how well it would have been with Ireland. Her scourge, blight and curse would not have been. But the work of emancipation has commenced even there. The Roman power is crippled; it is well described in the prophecy, ‘consuming unto the end.’ She attempts to reach forth her palsied hand, and to command this, that, and the other political thing to be done, but Ireland goes on her way not caring to obey. ‘How dare she?’ do you ask. The Irish are keen-witted and observing,” he continued; “they have

well been called 'the little children of the nations.' These little children have had a most instructive object lesson in the case of Dr. McGlynn, who ventured to disobey the Pope. His course brought down a terrible curse, the worst that Rome has in her arsenal of curses. The people were quick to see that this did not harm him, and have lost their old time fear of the Pope's malediction. It troubles them little that the waning power is speaking great words of boasting, since the Hand of God has taken it in judgment and stripped it of political power."

"Yes," continued the speaker, "the ex-priest and his fearless course have been a god-send to Ireland as well as to all over whom Rome tries to reign. In Ireland, he is called the man of the people. His publications are sold and scattered by the ten thousand. Besides it is simply marvellous the free course the Bible has made within the last five years. Not only is the Holy Book freely read, but reliable history as well, and the Irish find that St. Patrick never taught any of the doctrines of the church, by which she makes her money, but the unadulterated truths of the Gospel as found in the Word of God. This opens the eyes of many. Priests are coming out of Rome. I praise God for that."

This is the merest abstract of the address of the eloquent orator, who was often interrupted by bursts of applause from the deeply stirred, enthusiastic audience.

The hymns sung,—

“The morning light is breaking,”

and

“I’ll go to Jesus, though my sins,”

“What a Friend we have in Jesus,”

as well as fervent prayers, aided in making the services wonderfully effective.

Many came forward after the meeting to speak with the preacher, and assure him of their sympathy in the great movements of which he had discoursed. Some were true converts, for Rome has hosts of sincere souls among the masses, who only need to learn of the Saviour and His love to accept Him fully.

And this is now the most pressing work of God’s children in the home mission field, at our very doors and in our dwellings, even to witness to, and unfold the love of Him who tasted death for every man, that whosoever believeth might not perish, but have everlasting life through Him.

“The time has come,” said the preacher, in his conversation with those who gathered around him after service, “for you to throw off the Italian yoke, and organize as a free reformed church in the Name of the Lord Jesus. This will break the power of the Jesuits, and save the country. Converted Irish priests are coming to this country in large numbers; when they get strengthened by meeting with other Christians, some of them should return to help evangelize

their own country. One lately went back, and as he could not be permitted to preach in his church to his people, they were glad to hear from him in the yard of the church, and a powerful awakening was the consequence. Theatres and court-houses, and sometimes churches, are thronged with multitudes to hear the Gospel."

The next day, when her brother called, Bridget broke down, saying,—

"I want to learn what you know about Jesus loving us. I am not now afraid of the priest, and I want to learn how to live right."

With tears of joy her brother made the way plain, and as he was asking her about her certificates, she told him of the proposal of Buhler to have her pay him \$500, and return at once to Ireland.

"Well, what do you think you had better do?" asked her brother.

"I shall never pay him another cent," replied she, decidedly, "but I'll tell you, I want to make things right with my mistress before she goes away."

"I'm glad to hear that," said her brother. "What do you owe her?"

"I can't tell exactly, but it would do no harrum for me to make confession, and offer her the \$500."

And so the matter was settled.

The good lady, Mrs. Byington, was greatly touched at Bridget's repentance, and at first thought she would not take any part of the money, but after a careful

estimate, with Bridget's confession as a base of calculation, she concluded to take one-half the sum, and with it, furnish her brother Ralph, whose powerful address she heard, with books and tracts to circulate in Ireland, on his return. It came out that Bridget's curiosity, which was instigated by Father Buhler, was overruled for benefit to herself. When some of the lady friends of Mrs. Byington gathered at her house one afternoon, for a season of prayer, Bridget eagerly officiated as eaves-dropper, and having the good seed dropped in her heart unawares, it finally germinated, although at the time one would think it worse than thrown away.

Soon after this reconciliation, Mrs. Byington and Louise, with Florence Fairfax, took passage in a steamer for Liverpool. The Leavenworths accompanied them to New York, and with kindly benedictions, saw them aboard of the floating palace that was to convey them across the mighty deep. A few weeks later, Rev. Ralph Murray, the evangelist, and his sister Bridget, left America for Ireland.

XXIX.

Acting · a · Part.

STILLING was aware that a storm was gathering over his head. In his unflinching presumption, he felt equal to the emergency, and decided to be absent while he sleeplessly plotted to dupe Grace more fully, and secure Paul, saying to himself,—

“I’ll see that rascal put where he won’t disturb me; and as for my half-hearted betrothed, I must overpower her by a letter from Washington, electrified by my strong will, and sweetened with endearing terms.”

And thus it ran,—

WASHINGTON, Sept. 22, 188—.

MY PRECIOUS DARLING,—

It seems an age since I left you, and much has occurred of which I wish to tell you. I am asking myself, dearest, if you miss me as I miss you. Oh, that from your inmost heart you would say that you long for my return.

On my way here, while in New York, my friend, the millionaire D’Arbley, was married, and I could not avoid the wedding. It was a regal affair, the

most brilliant of the season. The bride was a daughter of a wealthy merchant residing on Fifth Avenue. Within, the superb dwelling was like a vast arbor, the entire walls being lined with fragrant showy flowers, hundreds of conservatories paying tribute to the gaudy triumph. The climax tableau was a skiff of orange blossoms in which a graceful nymph in white gave her heart to another fairy figure. Thus should thy wedded life be ushered in, my chosen, with floral display, albeit the most lovely flowers pale before thy peerless beauty.

After the wedding, I came directly to Washington. Events of grave import have transpired since I saw you. I now venture to confide to you a sacred secret. I am called here by momentous business,— nothing less than embassy— effecting the peaceful relations of a certain country and the United States. I have been conferring with the President and his cabinet every day for a week; and you will perceive that I am in honor bound to keep state affairs secret, hence my silence and absence. Please destroy this letter. I know that you will keep my trust, and be glad to welcome me on my return. I am doing glorious service for my adopted country, and my darling Grace shall yet be proud of her German Count.

Now, little one, write me at once, please, directing to me at New York, care of my agent, J. Jones, Esq., Court Square. I may be called there for a few hours, on pressing business, and it will be a great delight to receive it. If I am detained here, my agent will forward it immediately.

As ever, yours most devotedly,

JOHN STILLING.

It so happened that when Grace received this letter, she was with her mother in the little parlor of

the Aid Society, and they read the letter together, Grace saying, decidedly,—

“I shall certainly not keep any secrets from you, my darling mother. Nothing breaks up an evil spell like taking a wise friend into one’s confidence.”

“An embassy!” exclaimed Mrs. Leavenworth, shrewdly. “How the romance thickens.”

“Does n’t it?” said Grace. “And it is such a secret, and all about the fisheries, I conclude; and he the great conservative power that is to settle the question! I have less and less faith in him, and yet, if there is any truth in his words, he seems to be honored with a high commission,” added Grace. “It is fortunate that he is detained, as it will give me time to make investigation. How foolish in me to be persuaded to accept him so hastily. I shall get released from my engagement, no matter how good he may be, and take time to deliberate.”

“It is a great pity that we must give place to doubt,” replied Mrs. Leavenworth, thoughtfully. “But the case is clear, there will be nothing lost by calling a halt, and learning his history.”

After further conversation she left, being called away by pressing home duties.

Time passed. Grace, still in suspense, did not wish to see the Count, and had written him to that effect, also postponing further communication until her health should be improved.

But he continued to write, and his weekly letters

were redolent with the semblance of affection, while he was still closely confined to his business of the "secret embassy," which, in reality, was only gambling, starting another beer garden, and running his saloons in New York and Boston. He trusted to his wily letters to influence Grace, rather than his presence.

She, on her part, deferred returning home and meeting her father, until she could see Paul and sift his testimony. Although busy in her benevolent projects, her kindly heart being still called out in sympathy with young women whose lives had been marred by entering convent walls, yet she could not wholly forget her own trouble. Her father was still placidly settled in Stilling's favor, and in friendly correspondence with him. She did not deem it wise to disturb his peace by alluding to the dwarf's statements, and left the matter with her mother, who withheld the uncertain items respecting the character of the Count, until they could be either contradicted or verified.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Leavenworth and Grace employed a trusty detective to search the city for Paul,—not as a criminal, but to summon him to meet Grace, as she had an important errand for him. She coveted positive proof of Stilling's innocence or guilt, and was not aware that he had laid violent hands on Paul, and that a painful sickness was the result, but constantly wondered that the latter did not appear and

complete his half-given communication, and tell her where she could find the children he named.

One morning, after an almost sleepless night, Grace arose very early for a walk in the garden. The cooling air soothes her heated brow, and while she breathes the fragrance of the flowers, we will return to Susan and Elsae in the fancy goods store on Blank street.

XXX.

Surprises, and Plots Discovered.

THE clock struck twelve. The child Elsae, whom Paul left at Mrs. Ranney's shop, awoke from troubled sleep, the stifling heat of the closet where she slept giving her the idea that the house was on fire. She longed to call Susan, but did not dare speak a word. Mice nibbled, squeaked and scampered, while she imagined their noise was the old black cat coming to devour her. Quaking with terror, she got up and peeped out of the door. All was quiet, and gaining courage from the fresh air, she stole into the front shop, and passing behind the counter, crept into an open drawer half filled with ready-made clothing. She began to breathe more freely, but was wakeful, thinking of the past, and fearing horrors to come. Only six years of age, and she felt so old. The three years before her mother's death were long, and the three years since had been dreadful. The cruelty of the strange woman brought to mind the scenes of her

baby-life, when her unnatural father abused her mother, her sister, and herself. All her griefs seemed to press upon her at once. She was wondering when Paul would come and take her away, when a night-key turned the lock of the front door. Mrs. Ranney entered and lit the gas.

"Take a seat," said she to the man who followed her. "We can talk here without being overheard."

"Jest so," said the man.

He was tall and stout and had a black beard. The child saw that he was not Paul, but the wise little thing refrained from crying, and listened to find if he was a good man, that she might ask him to take her away.

There was then a long conversation of which Elsae understood little, save this, that some evil was planned for Susan, who, by the way, was just then petrified with fear behind the work-room door leading into the front shop. She had missed Elsae from the wood-closet, and was about to search the shop for her, when Mrs. Ranney came in with the stranger, Mr. Clamp. She listened as for her life to what was said, and found that the man was an agent of her mistress, in disposing of her girls when she was ready to get rid of them. She heard her own name mentioned as the next one to be consigned to a life infinitely worse than that she now endured.

Susan thought that Mr. Clamp seemed to have his

heart hardened by Mrs. Ranney, as she heard her say in the end of the conversation,—

“I do n't see how we can be expected to be better than our laws ; we are allowed to act out their spirit, as the liquor-sellers do. But if you give way to sickish qualms, our business contract must end.

“Oh, I shall stand by my agreement,” faltered he. “If you, a woman, can weather such things, I guess I can.”

“Of course you can,” replied Mrs. Ranney, laughing. “Now let me tell you, I am going to join the Catholic church. The priest can clean all your sins away at one sweep, and it is mighty convenient when one has a tender conscience, in business matters. I am considered quite religious, though you may not believe it. The collecting nuns call on me every week, and I always give them money. You ought to hear them bless me. They will insist that I am a great saint, and invite me to join their church. I am really a leading benevolent woman ; nobody gives more to church fairs than I do. My sewing girls make my fancy articles ; they do n't cost much, and sell like hot cakes, and advertise me. And, Joe, I 've been thinking that you 'd better join the church, it will indorse you and makes you respectable.”

“No, indeed !” replied Clamp. “I sha' n't do that. I do n't know any religion but the catechism, and that is no good. I'll let the church slide. The priest kept me ignorant in the parochial school, and I

hate the whole concern. They fed me on lies, and it is no use trying to stand upright, and walk straight. But I must go. The next thing on the docket is to cabbage Susan, deliver her to Grabbs, and give you half the fee," and with a dismal whistle, this wreck of a man went his way.

Mrs. Ranney having locked the door, turned off the gas, and like the uncanny being she was, whisked to her room in the darkness, and did not discover Susan or little Elsaë. When all was still the young thing softly groped her way back to her quarters, and worn out with fear and excitement soon fell asleep.

Not so with Susan, although she went to her apology of a bed, when she had softly kissed Elsaë, she was wakeful, planning for the daring thing she was moved to do.

Weeks had passed since she first undressed little Elsaë, when her heart was so touched with the thought of the dreadful prospect before the child. But this added care seemed to lift her out of her morbid existence, awakening dormant energies; and every day, as she ran the sewing machine or cleaned rooms, she was revolving the plan of escaping and taking Elsaë with her. But where in the wide, cold world, of which she knew so little, could she find a refuge? Hope flickered in her heart. Freedom, for herself and the child, was worth a struggle, and gradually there came to her aid the courage of the heroine, or one helped of God,

At twelve o'clock the next night, when all were asleep in the house, Susan stole softly into the lone wood closet, and wrapping the child in a shawl, quietly bore her out. The little one slept undisturbed as Susan sped swiftly over the sidewalk, bravely bearing her precious burden, with no delay, till, spent and breathless, she laid her down on a seat of the summer-house in a beautiful garden.

"Safe for to-night, at least," thought Susan, as she sank down exhausted.

Making her couch of the rustic seat opposite her charge, and overpowered with fatigue and debility, fell into a sound sleep. There the sun found them, as his rays peered into the lattice-work of vines and climbing plants.

Grace was in the midst of her morning walk and reverie. The Count having written that he was coming to see her that afternoon to have her appoint the day for the wedding, she was pacing anxiously to and fro, when she suddenly discovered the sleepers.

Her earnest, questioning eyes, fixed now on Susan, then on Elsaë, seemed partially to awaken the former, who arose, startled and confused.

"Do n't, do n't, mistress!" she cried, as if pursued by the terror of her life.

"Hush, hush, darling!" said Grace, gently. "No one shall harm you. I will take care of you. Tell me who you are, and how you came here. What is your name, dear?"

“Susan,” replied the girl, with wild, staring eyes.

“And who is this dear little girl? I think I have seen her before!”

“She is little Elsaë,” replied Susan, recovering herself; and Grace recalled that she had seen her in the park with the dwarf.

“She is a lovely little darling!” exclaimed Grace, deeply moved, as it flashed into her mind who she was:

Elsaë awoke, and began to sob, when Susan stole softly to her side, and kissing her, told her not to cry, they were safe, and the good lady would be kind to them.

“I am very glad that you are here!” welcomed Grace, cheerily. “Come right into the house and have breakfast, and then you can tell me how you came here.”

The children were very glad to be asked in, as they would be safer from pursuit, and, besides, they were pinched with hunger, as good and sufficient food they rarely had at the place they had left.

Turning from the arbor, Grace saw, with glad surprise, on the sidewalk opposite the garden, the dwarf slowly passing, as if he would like to speak to her. In an instant she was at the gate, and ushered him in beside her new friends.

“Oh, you’re my good Paul!” cried Elsaë, running and grasping him by the neck.

“You are a darling!” replied Paul, huskily. “How

did you find the way here? Did the good lady ferret you out?"

"No," replied Grace; "this young Miss brought her here, guided by some ministering angel, I must think. Are they sisters?"

"No, lady," said Paul; "the Miss is a stranger. Little Elsae is one of the children I was telling you of."

"The dear child!" exclaimed Grace, tenderly. "Come right in," as she showed the children into the sitting-room. But Paul remained in the hall, where she returned and had a few moments conversation with him, before urging him in.

Briefly he told her that he had left Elsae at Mrs. Ranney's store, and that he had not been able to see her since then, giving the reasons.

Her resolution was taken. Armed with the testimony and abundant proofs furnished by Paul, she would take the child home with her, and convince her parents of the false record of Stilling, and escape his snare.

"Where is the other child?" asked she.

"She has been working in the mill, Miss, where her father put her under a false name, as he was told that this little one was dead, and supposed that he could thus get their mother's property. She boards with my aunt, and is now sick."

"What a marvel of deceit!" she murmured. Then aloud, "I must see her also, but can not now delay.

I must go at once to my father's house. Will you have the care of the sick child till my return? I will pay all expenses."

Grace planned to leave town by the next train, lest the Count appear and hinder her plans, for she had an indefinable fear of his influence.

"Now, Paul, come in and have breakfast, and persuade the little one to go with me, for if she will not, I must take you, also."

Elsae ran to Paul and clung to him as he came in. Grace had the breakfast spread in the back parlor, that she might have a good talk with her guests. As she learned from Susan passages of her life, her heart opened to befriend her, and help her to a situation.

"It is so providential, your coming," she said; "for aunt is fitting off for a journey, and was wishing yesterday that she could find a faithful young girl to save her steps, and I think you will fill the place."

"Will she want me?" cried Susan.

"I think she will. She is the most motherly woman; you can not help loving her. I'll run and see about it," added she, after helping her visitors to the bountiful repast. "I'll be back soon!" as she left in search of her aunt.

Mrs. Byington was glad to hear of a good waiting-girl, and at once engaged Susan.

Meanwhile, Paul drew little by little from Elsae the story of her misery at the shop, and of the kind ways of Susan toward her, and how Mrs. Ranney planned

to have a bad man take her away. Indignant at the treatment of the child, he reproached himself for "venturing to leave her with a smooth-spoken stranger."

"I will see that you have a kind friend this time, little Elsaë," he kindly said. "The beautiful Miss Grace loves you. Will you take a drive with her to-day?"

"Not till Paul goes with me," was the firm response. "I don't like the strange faces."

"But, Elsie, you are a fine slip of a woman, and Paul must earn money to buy you food and clothes. Won't you stay with the lovely Miss Grace, while I work for you, and then no naughty woman will come to carry you off.

"Yes, I will stay with Miss Grace, if she will love me," replied the child, quickly, and the moment Grace returned and caressed her, Elsaë threw her arms around her neck, and asked if she might be her little girl.

"Yes, darling child," replied the young lady, clasping her in her arms and kissing her. "And this very day I'll take you to my beautiful home. You shall have my pretty playthings; the little dolls and play-houses I used to have when I was a child shall be yours and your sister's. Come, little one, will you go with me?"

"Yes," whispered Elsaë, clinging closely to her new friend. "I love you!"

“I love you, too, dear,” was the reply.

After breakfast, Grace said,—

“Now, Paul, if you will attend to some errands and Susan will help us get ready, we will soon be off.

And in due time Grace left with her precious charge.

Mr. Leavenworth, the father of Grace, was a substantial Englishman, a lordly, well-fed gentleman of the old school and king of his realm, which comprised Gynnboro mills and a beautiful villa. He had fancied the Count partly because he was from the old country, and as he sat in the porch of his elegant residence, was musing on his daughter’s brilliant prospects.

As the carriage stopped he went down the steps to hand out his daughter, softened in glad surprise.

“Bless you! Grace, darling, it is you, indeed! Welcome home, my child!”

“Oh, father dear, I am so glad to come. There’s no place like home. Where’s mother?” as they entered the pleasant home-room, little Elsaë following.

“Your mother is in the kitchen, teaching her new servant the mystery of supper getting. But what baggage is this? Where did this child come from?”

“This is my little friend, Elsaë. Come and speak to my good father, little one.”

The child hung back. Fathers were to be dreaded,

in her view ; the very name called up fearful memories.

“ Hump ! ” growled Mr. Leavenworth. “ You always were tugging home some mangy little kitten ! ”

“ But, father, this is a darling little girl, and she has come home to keep me company for awhile. Does she remind you of any one ? ”

“ Let me see. Hive 'ardly taken hobobservation.” Mr. Leavenworth was from Yorkshire, and when off his guard sometimes fell into his old dialect. He put on his glasses, drew near the child, and carefully scanned her features. “ She is kin to Count Stilling ; child, I should say, hif hit were possible that the Count 'ad a child.”

“ Well, father, I will see you soon. Now, little one, come with me. I am going to give you a nice supper and show you my pretty room. You may sleep with me, darling, and to-morrow, when we are rested, we'll take a drive in the chaise. I'll let you hold the reins, and away we'll go down the cart-path in the woods, gather wild flowers and have lots of fun ! ”

Saying this, she embraced Elsae and led her out. The child was glad to get away from the presence of gruff Mr. Leavenworth, who, although rough in outward seeming, had a genuine, benevolent heart.

When Elsae had been warmly welcomed by Mrs. Leavenworth, and, after her supper, was put to bed,

Grace returned to tell her father and mother the recent disclosures respecting the Count. Mrs. Leavenworth was not surprised, but her husband was at first obstinately slow to admit evidence against Stilling. Grace's testimony, however, was so clear and direct that he could not withstand it, and after a time, as he considered the matter, he grew indignant, and his anger gradually rose to a white heat.

“Disown 'is children! Most sinful and hinfamous!” at length burst from his stern lips.

“I would not have believed he could be such a brute!” said Mrs. Leavenworth.

“The impostor! To palm himself off as genuine upon honest people!” exclaimed Mr. Leavenworth. “He borrowed two thousand dollars when he was last here, until he could get funds from his banker in Dresden.”

“Yes, father, you told me,” replied the wife; “and I've wondered that he should have the face to ask you, of all others.”

“The law will be after him!” was the answer.

“Oh, father,” exclaimed Grace, “I am glad that you understand him, for he may even sue me for breach of promise.”

“I hope he will, upon my word,” replied Mr. Leavenworth. “Little good will it do him. He has forfeited all claim to you. I shall force him to own his children, and remove his grasp from their property, as well as to pay every farthing he owes me.”

"I hope you will, indeed, father; and as soon as little Elsae gets wonted to the house and grounds, and loves you and mother, I must return and look up her sister. And I hope I may never meet the Count again!" and overcome with distress that she had been so duped, she burst into tears.

"Well, well," replied Mr. Leavenworth, so touched that he brushed away a tear; "do n't worry! We must think ourselves happy in discovering the rascal in season to escape his wiles. I would rather bury you, Grace, than have you the wife of that man!"

The tea bell rang, and Mrs. Leavenworth led the way to the supper table.

There it was arranged, as soon as possible after Mrs. Byington sailed, for the whole family to remove to Byington Mansion, which Mr. Leavenworth had recently purchased of his sister-in-law.

Grace had planned this, and was overjoyed that her parents were of the same mind.

Grace had been absent only a few hours when Stilling made his appearance. As he had written her in good season that he would visit her at her aunt's residence on that day, and for a special reason, notwithstanding the rebuffs she had given him, he strangely expected her to meet him with a cordial welcome.

Susan came to the door, and he learned from her that Miss Grace was out of town, and would not return for several days. He could get no farther information, as Mrs. Byington and Louise were out.

Disappointed and mortified he abruptly turned from the house, and walked aimlessly through street after street, and at length commenced pacing up and down the bridge that spanned the river which was at hand. There was very beautiful scenery outspread before him, but so beclouded were his own private prospects, that he might as well have been on a desert. He kept up a searching questioning with himself. Could it be that his feint of ambassadorship had failed to impress Miss Grace? Did she doubt him more than ever? Yes, else she would have left a note excusing her absence. Very possibly he would lose her after all. What then? His was not heart, but pocket fear. Intensely mercenary, he determined in that case to make capital out of political preferment. He had already committed himself fully as a peer on the License question, and expected to ride into power on that tidal wave, as Buhler some time before predicted that he would.

While planning the next movement on his ensnaring chess-board he saw two men on the opposite end of the bridge, earnestly talking as they walked and enjoyed the outlook. It was a stranger visiting the city, to whom Mr. Bryan was showing the lions. Now Bryan was the very man that Stilling did not wish to meet, for there was an account on the old score of his assault on Paul as yet unsettled, and he quickly tried to avoid him, but was too late, as the Celt was keen-eyed and had been put on the police

force, when extra detectives were needed,—although at this time not commissioned. He sighted Stilling, and made for him, as the stranger was talking to a citizen whom he had met.

“Stranger, I ’ve seen you before,” said Bryan.

“What, sir?” haughtily rejoined Stilling.

“Shall I call your name ‘Burt,’ sir?” was the answer.

“No; that is n’t my name,” was the reply.

“I could take my oath that you are the father of little Mary Burt, my sister’s boarder, you favor her that strongly.”

“Never saw or heard of her!” burst from the Count.

“I am never mistaken,” said the other. “You are her father, if your name is Stilling. The child has been sore sick at our house, and whose money is to pay the bills?”

“Nonsense!” cried Stilling, turning pale. “If you ’ve picked up a strange child, put her in the hospital, where she belongs.”

“But I shall call on you to foot the bills, all the same.”

Although Stilling remembered the certificates that he had as to the death of his children, yet he turned moodily away at thought of the ill-gotten property, and Bryan was for the time again taken up with the stranger.

Stilling, at fault, concluded to seek his friend Buhler,

for advice. On the way to his residence he saw that a stranger was intently regarding him, and later that he followed him. This led him to take a short cut through unfrequented streets to avoid him. But nevertheless the man closely shadowed him, and would not be foiled.

At length, as Stilling gained Buhler's premises, he lost sight of him, to his great relief. He found Buhler in a shady arbor of his garden, quite at leisure, and at once commenced telling him of the adventure on the bridge, and of Mr. Bryan's accusation and claim that Mary Burt was his child.

"That's bad!" replied Buhler. "Stilling, you must try to hush that matter up somehow, or it will injure your prospects for marriage. Why can't you bribe Bryan?"

"Oh, no, it would be of no use. But I can show the certificates of my children's death," replied Stilling.

"That's well," was the reply. "But that Bryan holds on, when he has a grip, and he is the most expert detective in town. If I were you, I would leave for California for a while, until this thing blows over. Bryan will lose sight of you, and out of sight out of mind."

"I think I'll take your advice, and make myself absent for a time," was the crestfallen reply.

But the man who had followed him was watching him still, from a small vista in the hedge, and not

only watching, but listening to what he said. He heard Buhler call him by name, so that he was sure of his bird.

The officer immediately walked into the garden, and with his hand on Stilling's shoulder, said, "You are my prisoner!" and despite sundry struggles, with the aid of a policeman at hand for the purpose, he speedily remanded him to jail, under an indictment for a fraudulent transaction with a New York firm.

XXXI.

The Handwriting on the Wall.

WHEN Bishop Berlin returned to Madonna Hall from his lecturing tour in the large cities, Madame Clarissima was watching at the side-door for the carriage, and ran down the steps, overjoyed to meet him.

“My blessed little wife!” exclaimed the bishop, taking her in his arms and carrying her into the parlor of the suite of rooms, which was their home.

“I am delighted that you are safely back again,” said the happy wife. “I feared that your enemies and the mobs would be the death of you.”

“No danger, dear; I am immortal till my work is done. When the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall raise up a standard against it. It is the great joy of my heart to see this work going on.”

“And mine too, dearest,” chimed in the lady. “It is so wonderful! What hath God wrought!”

Soon they had tea served by themselves; and the

bishop reviewed the thrilling things that had happened since they were separated.

After tea they adjourned to their favorite seat on the veranda, where the Lady Clarissima, in her lively way, rehearsed the events of the reception, when the Archbishop made boasts of the doings of the great conspiracy, of his plan to rebuild a portion of All Saints' Convent, for disciplinary purposes ; of the excursion of the clerical party to the wing basement for measurements, and the accident that befell them, resulting in duration vile for one interminable week ; and that now the aged Archbishop was more than ever a wretched invalid, in consequence of his fright and fasting, and was so utterly disgusted with thick walls that he would build no more. His belief in bad omens, with his poor health, depressed his spirits, and he went moaning around his quarters at the watering place almost too miserable to live.

Stilling's arrest, and Buhler's temporary disappearance, because of complicity in his affairs, were in the list of items recalled.

"One less Jesuit to work mischief here," observed the bishop, sententiously.

"Poor brother!" cried Madame Clarissima. "I thought he had abjured his vow, and decided to stand with us."

"I did not rely on what he said," replied the Bishop ; "but it is the system he has adopted that has spoiled him. To do evil that good may come, is

the grand policy of his order. It poisons the mind, perverts the motives of action, takes away the fear of God from the heart, and finally, if pursued, gives one over to work all unrighteousness with greediness, when, if the same person had given his heart to God, and lived in His fear, he would have led a holy life and been kept unspotted from the world."

"It is true," said the lady, "the religion that we thought all right, has proved, in the light of God's Word, all wrong."

"Praise the Lord for that!" exclaimed the bishop. "It was the only way that He could save us. The exposure of our Babel has seemed to me like the Hand-writing on the Wall, which warned Belshazzar of his doom. Well will it be for those who hear the interpretation, and flee out of the doomed city, as for their lives."

"Doomed like the fated city, Johnstown, I fear," said the lady. "In our case, however, many are escaping."

"Yes, yes, because the alarm has so long been given. Our church is weighed in the balances, and found wanting in all that is holy and upright. The uncovering of the system means its downfall. The first step in a reform is to pour in the light of day. Expose, agitate, unveil! Then the works of darkness must haste to flee away, as bats before the sun."

"Yes, yes. But do you know, my lord," cried the

lady, "that I am ashamed of my education. It has been only conventual, you remember, and very inferior to that of Protestant schools."

"That is true, my darling," sadly assented the bishop.

"I'll tell you what I mean to do. I have been talking with my friend, Miss Leavenworth, and she thinks I am right. We must call to our aid the best Christian teachers in the land, and I shall join the classes. If Rome has cheated me out of a good education, she can cheat no more. I am ashamed of our record."

"It is ours no longer!" exclaimed the bishop. "I am responsible for the Institution. We will have a thorough reconstruction."

The predecessor of Bishop Berlin, as is the custom, willed to him the church property of the diocese, including the convent, although he, the dying bishop, did not own one cent of it. When Bishop Berlin came in possession, he found that a part of it, the convent, was property only in name, being covered with a mortgage, and, as it was to be foreclosed, nothing remained but to sell it at auction.

This was accordingly done, a friend of the bishop's bidding it in, with a sum sufficient to lift the mortgage, and a new mortgage was given him as security. The transaction was recorded, and it was known that the convent was owned outside of the church and simply rented, and that the bishop would be at

liberty to disband the sisterhood and close the academy whenever the convent did not pay expenses. It is sometimes necessary for this to be done, when an unendowed convent belongs to the church; as when the sisters cannot collect enough for current expenses, or if the tuition from the scholars does not suffice to support the institution.

In the great change that had taken place in the bishop's views, he was rejoiced that he was free to resign his See, and with the concurrence of his friend, a wealthy Protestant layman, reorganize and purify Madonna Hall.

"We will have thorough changes made," repeated Bishop Berlin, with emphasis. "We will begin at the chapel. The statues, the candles, Madonnas, crosses, crucifixes, shrines, baldachins, scapulars, pictures, all priestly garments, whether they be cope, mitre or stole, shall be banished. A force of men shall come at once, and make an end of false accessories of worship. When the building is thoroughly cleansed of its abominations, and suitably repaired, it shall be dedicated to the only living and true God. It shall be a house of worship, not only for the new seminary, but for whoever wishes to come in and hear the Word of the Lord."

"You almost take my breath away!" cried the lady. "That will be splendid. What a wonderful change it will be!"

"Yes, dear, but you know I have not officiated

there for a long time, and it is now fitting that I destroy the altars to false gods. I fully believe that the bread-god is the greatest abomination in the sight of God. And in view of this worst idolatry ever conceived by man, well is Rome called 'The Mother of Abominations of the Earth.' Mass was clearly devised for the money it would bring into the church.

"But who are these coming over the terraces? The very men I want to see. Ho, Brother Williams, step this way, please. And Hosea, too, glad to see you!" and he arose to greet them, and gave them seats beside him, saying, "Wife and I have been talking over the matter of which I spoke to you. We had disposed of the chapel. Now I want you to suggest as to the grounds, and see how far our views agree."

"This is to be a Reformed Catholic institution?" asked Father Williams.

"Exactly," replied the other. "It must be an institution in which Protestants can send their children, knowing that they will be trained up to be true to Christ, and loyal to their country."

"Yes," said Father Williams, "I see. And I am with you in receiving the blessed Saviour as my Redeemer. Hosea is at home in the true and living way, and has led me on. I would at once take every image of the Virgin and all statues of saints away, and leave not a remnant of them in our grounds."

"It seems almost too bad to destroy that elegant

piece of sculpture, the Virgin and her Child," said the lady. "Pity it was ever used in worship!"

"Would you have it preserved?" asked the bishop, searchingly.

"No, no; by no means. I remember it is like the mother and child of Babylonian worship. It must be destroyed; it has led souls astray."

"What about St. Joseph, the figure in the grotto?" asked the bishop.

"Have it broken to pieces, that no more damage may be done," was the earnest reply.

The bishop took Hosea aside to inquire about the disposal of condemned nuns, and the niches. He had kept closer watch over his nephew's works of mercy, than the young man dreamed of, and was not surprised when he acknowledged that he had been successful in carrying out his stratagem in every case, and there were really only effigies of nuns walled up in the niches.

"So I thought," exclaimed the bishop, gladly. "Praise God!" He then returned and told the glad news to Madame Clarissima and Father Williams. and all rejoiced together over precious lives saved.

"Oh, I am so glad that the Lord raised up Hosea to help in time of need," said the lady. "And now I want everything that has been worshiped to be utterly destroyed," continued she, "and I shall commence myself with hammer and chisel, and act out my faith. The arbors and grottoes we will change

somewhat, and have them fitted up for recitations, kindergarten exercises, and playhouses for the younger children, it is so difficult to amuse them," added Madame Clarissima.

"Very well, do as you like, and win them to love the Good Shepherd," was the genial rejoinder of the bishop.

"Another thing ; I want to see the dreadful cells of the great Wing wiped out of existence," said the lady.

"Yes, by all means," replied the bishop. "All praise to God! no bones are in the niches to cry out against us. Our blessed Hosea, his record is on high. I wish, too, that we could sweep the cells away from every religious house that has them, and what the cells imply, cruel decrees for those who dare think for themselves."

"The people are awakening," said Father Williams, intensely stirred, "and the Government will yet confiscate these religious houses and devote the avails to education, as has been done in Europe. I do from my whole soul denounce every shade and symbol of the Inquisition, wherever found."

"Amen and amen!" added the bishop. "It is a poor sham of a religion that must resort to torture, the rack, and imprisonment, to keep its victims in its pale. But now for our work. We will plan it all to-night, and to-morrow, Hosea, have a force of men come and make this place over for the Lord."

It cannot be supposed that a movement of such magnitude as changing the religion of Madonna Hall, could be effected without opposition. The next morning, when the carpenters and masons commenced work under the bishop's direction, as the inmates of the castle-like building saw them arrive, there was a ripple of doubtful inquiry. Service had not been held in the chapel since the bishop's return. The reading of the Bible, and prayers, were in the large parlor every morning and evening, instead of the former exercises of mass worship. The priests, Krafts and Pecci, happened in to breakfast this particular morning, although they had till then shamefacedly kept aloof; now they came to take observations.

"Making repairs, my Lord Bishop?" asked Krafts, guardedly, as he sipped his coffee. His conscience qualms in the Tombs had proved evanescent.

"I am having a general overhauling," was the bishop's reply. "I find when the Tombs turn out to be a trap, and almost the death of a Mother Superior, and later of a clerical party of four, it is time a few windows be made to honeycomb the walls. You understand me, from my conversation at my wedding, and at other times. I have taken the stand of renouncing the false system which has blinded us nearly to our ruin, and from your words of assent at that time, I gather that you are with me in your sympathies."

"I gave you some encouragement," replied Krafts, "but since I have reconsidered the matter, I am more doubtful."

"And how is it with you?" asked the bishop, turning his keen eye on Father Pecci.

"Don't think of counting on me," was the quavering reply. "I could n't attempt going against the interests of Uncle Leo. He educated me, and of course I think lots more of him, and his promotion, than I do of Uncle Sam and his Government. I must hold up the Italian kingdom at any hazard."

"Very well," said the bishop, "if you uphold a foreign power, there will be no opening for you here. Between the loyal Americans and you there is the wide distance which separates those who obey the laws and those who do not."

"Is that so? But who'll say the masses?" asked Pecci, in bewildered dismay.

"There will be no masses to be said," replied the bishop. "We've done with that idolatry, the most absurd and heaven-daring on earth."

"No masses! no masses!" cried Pecci. "What will Uncle Leo say?"

And immediately after breakfast he left and sent the news. The consequence was, the Pope receiving information of the remarkable state of things, nervously ordered the bishop to repair to Rome and give account of his doings.

This the bishop politely declined to do. He had

been there recently, had a pleasant conference with his Highness, and could not leave the work in hand to make a journey. At the same time he confessed his faith in Christ, and earnestly warned the pontiff to escape from the judgment near, by taking refuge in the infinite and merciful Saviour.

As the remodelling of the church, the basements, and grounds progressed, the entire place took on a new aspect.

Many of the nuns were oppressed with fear, and left Madonna Hall. Changing their dress, some went to intelligence offices, and, when least suspected, found places in families as servants. Others, more intelligent, became teachers, or joined a well-established educational institute, to prepare to teach.

Krafts, working continually against Bishop Berlin, succeeded in stirring up the priests and bishops far and near to oppose him. But he knew his ground, that his friend had a legal right under the laws of this country, to hold the property, and had empowered him to make such changes as he chose. A foreign potentate could not dictate in the matter, so the good work was not delayed.

The clang and din of the chisel, hammer, pick-axe, and saw, made vocal the buildings and their basements, as the wise bishop, with his right-hand man, Hosea, went from one set of workmen to another, saying pleasant, encouraging words, and giving specific directions about the repairs he had planned.

One day, Archbishop Bland, returning from his beach quarters, still an invalid, called to see the bishop, and hobbling on crutches, found him giving orders to a squad of men who were engaged in demolishing images in the Madonna Hall grounds.

“Saint Christopher!” cried the feeble-voiced prelate. “What sacrilege is this? Bishop Berlin, you are pulling down what you have these long years been building.”

“That ’s true. I am trying to undo some of the wrong I have done,” was the calm rejoinder, as he charged the men to make thorough work in demolishing the idols.

“Stop, stop, Berlin! stop your men!” groaned the Archbishop. “This is an educational institution; we educate for the Pope.

“Very well,” said the bishop. “The Pope lives in an era of improvement, when all good people are ashamed of the ignorance, mistakes, and atrocities of the past.”

“He’ll never change!” burst from the aged prelate. “Listen to the last curse of the Syllabus of 1864; ‘Anathema to whomsoever shall say, the Roman Pontiff should and must reconcile himself to and harmonize with progress, liberalism, and modern civilization.’ You see the Pope can not change, and it is the height of heresy for you to pull down and change our educational institutions. I learn that you have instigated the Government to meddle with our schools for boys.”

“Yes, I have, with others, had influence with the law-makers,” was the reply. “Your Grace may remember that this battle has been fought in France. Men of worth and eloquence advocated the right. An orator said in one of his speeches before the Chamber of Deputies, ‘The State has the right to concern itself as to the consequences of the doctrines impressed on the minds of youth. On the ground of *social preservation*, the State is sovereign master. On this ground it must scrupulously examine if the men to whom it intrusts, or grants the right to intrust, the education of the young citizens, are worthy of that confidence; it has the right to examine if their doctrines are not dangerous to the public peace, to the social order; it has the right to examine if by intrusting the young men to them, it does not prepare for a civil war in a longer or shorter period.’ We do well to recall his words and make a stand for loyalty to our country.”

“The Pope commands you to go to Rome,” cried the Archbishop, obdurately. “You will obey, of course.”

“I shall never obey any mandate of his,” replied Bishop Berlin.

“Why not?” asked the prelate.

“Because we do not live in the Middle Ages; and the Pope of Rome has no more right to summon me to him than has the Sultan of Turkey, the Czar of Russia or the Emperor of China, and his claims to

power in this country are just as reasonable as theirs would be. As to the educational plans of you Jesuits, the State has the right to say, as France said to the Order in her borders in 1880, 'You will not recognize my authority, therefore I will not permit you, who are despising my rights, to teach the national youth.'"

The words fell upon the ears of the aged prelate like the death-knell of his hopes.

Meanwhile the workmen had broken to pieces, in one huge pile, every image in the grounds. First of all, the image of Mary on the roof, sheltered by the cupola. There were several other statues of the Madonna; as she has been made the patron saint of the United States, her graven images abound. There were also images of the child Jesus, as well as life-size figures of Joseph and other patron saints. As the nuns beheld, they saw that these senseless idols had no more power than the Philistines' god, Dagon, not being able even to hinder themselves from being destroyed. As Bishop Berlin helped on the demolition, he was filled with a strange peace, while the benighted prelate, often by his side, writhed with angry emotions."

"You 'll be deprived," he mourned. "You 'll be unfrocked. You 'll be imprisoned, I warn you. Alas! alas! the loss of this great treasure."

Bishop Berlin made no reply, but gave orders to the laborers to remove the debris, and commence work on the walls in the large wing.

“Now, your Grace,” said he to the Archbishop, “you surely will approve of having windows thrown into these thick walls after what you suffered when confined here?”

“I care nothing for the walls, now that I am free, but I can not get over the thought of this great sacrilege,” cried the Archbishop.

“It seems strange to you, no doubt,” replied Bishop Berlin. “But you must remember that the Lord is a jealous God, and will not share His worship with another. His second command is, ‘Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, nor any likeness of any thing that is in the heaven above, or the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them or serve them.’ Now since graven images are expressly forbidden in His holy Word, it is my duty to destroy them, as you see.”

“I never saw them forbidden,” haughtily replied his Grace. “And I do n’t believe they are.”

“Here is a copy of the whole Bible,” said the bishop in reply, handing it to him. “In it you will find this second commandment, which is sinfully omitted in the Douay version, to shelter idolatry. Will you accept it?”

The prelate took the gift and contemptuously threw it on the pile of rubbish, saying with bitter scorn, “That’s the whole trouble! It’s the everlasting Bible that is in the way. If it was not for that, the

Pope would have his say about every thing in this country. It 's the open Bible, the godless public schools and the liberty of thinking, that prevent his universal sway. But we are organizing more than ever, and we'll teach you bigots a lesson when the year comes round!" and he stumbled away on his crutches in impotent rage, an object lesson like the Pope of Rome.

The wealthy merchant who advanced money to clear Madonna Hall, and who had his own deed recorded, as soon as Bishop Berlin had resigned his See, made a gift of the institution to the bishop and a board of trustees, for educational uses.

While the reconstruction was going on at Madonna Hall, Madame Clarissima, at the suggestion of her husband, drove over to the city and commenced operations at one of the Branch schools. This was easier for her, as the teachers were from Madonna Hall, and were appointed by those having care of that institution,—the Superioress having most to do with the selection.

She had previously conferred with Grace Leavenworth and Mr. Cameron, whom she interviewed at Bellevue, and the Aid Society, as to the school-books needed to meet the requisition of the Commissioners, who were to visit it. She had also selected a number of converted nuns, who had for some little time been members of Hosea's Bible class and gave evidence of a change of heart, and were longing to lead others, as they had been led, into the light.

These were awaiting her call at the Aid Society's Rooms, and were to be employed for a short time, until regularly trained teachers could be obtained, when they in turn were to engage in a course of study.

"Now," said Madame Clarissima to Grace, as the two reached the ante-room of the Branch Seminary, "the first step is to see if any one of the text books will answer. I have not the least idea even one will do."

"Of course not," said Grace. "It will not do to have any book retained that the priests have manipulated into teaching falsehood."

As Miss Leavenworth had been appointed assistant on the school board of which Mr. Cameron was chairman, she had had text books given her to examine, and, among others, those in common use in the parochial schools. She found these last saturated with the teachings of the papacy, and of this Madame Clarissima was fully aware.

"The Catholic National Series will never pass muster with our school board," said Grace, as they were seated in an ante-room of the seminary, where were piled copies of the books used by the pupils.

Taking up a Third Reader — one of the Series referred to, — Grace found it stated in the preface that, "in common with the other books of the Catholic National Series, it had one chief characteristic, viz., a thoroughly Catholic tone, which will be found to pervade the whole book."

“There is no doubt about that!” exclaimed Madame Clarissima. “See, here is the first story: ‘Bessie’s First Mass.’ I was treated to that when a little tot. And further on you will find, ‘How to be a Nun,’ on which I was well fed, early and late. Then there is ‘Saint Bridget,’ and the ‘St. Patrick Penny.’ It is Catholic all through, and I pity the children taught in such readers, as never before. It is starvation, as far as the intellect and practical information are concerned, to say nothing of the poison mixed with the sloppy food.”

As they glanced over the histories, geographies and reading books, they found them all perverted to teach Catholicism. One of the histories most in use, written by a Jesuit, is infused with his theological hatred of Protestantism and the acknowledged facts of years gone by as related by reliable historians. Tetzl, the German monk, he eulogizes to the skies, and without a word of condemnation of the indulgences which he sold all over Germany. As for Luther, he can not curse him enough. In this history the children are taught that Luther was a very bad man, and that Protestantism is the worst kind of religion and makes everybody vicious.

“None of these books can be tolerated,” said Grace, “they are so utterly false. Why, statistics show that the New York parochial schools turn out three and a half times as many paupers as the public schools. Here is another history,” opening it. “See,

here it is stated that John Calvin was expelled from the university on account of his immoralities. It calls John Knox a bad priest, and the ruffian of the Reformation."

"I know how false the entire Series is," said Madame Clarissima. "My husband has brought home books from the Public Library, and we have compared our Catholic school books with true authors, and find them worse than useless. We examined the 'Bible History, with an Appendix of Church History,' very popular, and indorsed by cardinals, archbishops and bishops. Here is the very book. It magnifies the persecutions under Henry and Elizabeth, and is silent about the career of Bloody Mary. See how this chapter is ended: 'Catholicity [Romanism] has ever appealed to reason; Protestantism, like Mohammedanism, to force and violence.'"

"What falsifying!" exclaimed Grace. "What a work it will be to help the dear children unlearn all this! It is well that the Government bestirs itself to the task, for every day it becomes more difficult."

"Oh, I know it, I know it, and it is very sad that I have so long blindly fed on falsehood, and given it to others. But now that the true light has come into my soul, I hope to be doubly diligent and seek to undo, as far as possible, the great wrong. We must hasten to educate in the true sense."

"Yes," replied Grace, "that is the great work. Educate, hasten to give something better,—antidotes

for the poison so long instilled in tender minds ; and I know that God will help and bless us in doing this."

Entering the seminary, Madame Clarissima gave the nuns in charge a vacation, sending them back to Madonna Hall for a course of instruction, while she inducted in their places those she had summoned. These were genuine Bible readers, who were greatly needed to help enlighten the little ones. The catechisms and text books were all gathered up, and taken into the ante-room ; and just then Hosea appeared with a wagon-load of Testaments, which had been ordered from the Bible House. The nuns were instructed to distribute them to the children, and, calling them to order, commencing with the Gospel of Matthew, as many as could, read in rotation.

Hosea was then told to take every image from the school-room, and pack them into his empty wagon, and lose no time in giving them to the flames. As Grace assisted him, the children were wonder-struck, while Madame Clarissima, who won their hearts by her genial manner, explained why she removed them.

"Children," said she, "what are these?" pointing to the idols.

Many hands were raised.

"Them's emiges," said a little Irish boy to whom she pointed.

"Yes," said she ; "they are graven images, that

the dear Lord, our Heavenly Father, who loves us so much, forbids us to make."

She then read the second commandment, had them repeat it after her, explained it, and told them that some wicked men had left it out of the Catholic Bible, so that people might forget that God had forbidden the making of images to worship.

A smutty little hand was raised.

"Well, Patrick, what is it?"

"Father Buhler, he believes in emiges, and he won't want 'em taken off."

"Well," the lady replied, "he is far away, and will never stand up here and talk about them any more."

Another hand was lifted.

"Well, Johnnie, what is it?"

"My father and mother believes in them, and what 'll we do wanting them?"

"'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve,'" was the reply. "That's what the Lord says. And now, dear children, I want you to read a beautiful story about the Lord Jesus when He was born into this world."

Then as they read the story, partly from Matthew and partly from Luke, she talked to them of His lowly birth,—and that now He was in heaven, loving us and ready to save us from our sins,—and then Luther's hymn for his children having been written on the blackboard, she had them learn to sing it, Grace

leading and the musical nuns joining the children in singing,—

“ Away in a manger, no crib for his bed,
The little Lord Jesus lay down His sweet head ;
The stars in the sky looked down where He lay,
The little Lord Jesus asleep in the hay.

“ The cattle are lowing, the poor Baby wakes,
But little Lord Jesus no crying He makes.
I love Thee, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky,
And watch by me always, and ever be nigh.”

They then sang, —

and “ What a Friend we have in Jesus,”
 “ Jesus loves me, this I know,”

and other hymns for little ones, spending a full half-hour in the exercise.

The children were delighted. Many a dull eye was brightened with new thought, and as all were tired to death with the false teaching of the catechism and scapular, they were hungry for better food, and partook of it with a relish. As the children started on their way home, little groups chatted together.

“ Oh, did n't the ladies talk lovely!” said they.

“ Oh, yes ; I want to have **them** come every day and tell us such nice things, and have us sing,” said others.

They all went home so happy that the parents were won to look favorably on Madame Clarissima's

faith. They seldom were in favor of the parochial school, and gladly welcomed a change looking towards the public school, especially as the law demanded it.

This was but the beginning. A genuine American school of the primary, intermediate and grammar grades was soon under way, in which the Bible was read and prayer offered in the Name of the One Saviour.

In a month, an entire revolution had also been made in Madonna Hall. The vast building and adjoining chapel were rededicated, and with the fall term a ladies' seminary was opened, with a new corps of instructors, and a full attendance of pupils ready to commence training for usefulness as American citizens. The Lady Clarissima, and many nuns, with pupils from far and near, joined the seminary as scholars, resolved, if possible, to atone in some measure for past lack of opportunity by persistent diligence in study.

XXXII.

"Mystery" Unveiled.

NOT long after Mrs. Byington sailed for Europe, the "Mansion" was refurnished more beautifully than ever and became the abode of the Leavenworths. While getting settled, mother and daughter did not forget their responsibilities at the Aid Rooms. An early event in the new home was a reception. Among the many invited guests were Mr. Cameron, Col. Southbury and his niece Ella, Bishop Berlin with Madame Clarissima, and Father Williams and wife. While preparing for this gathering, Grace drove over to Madonna Hall and called on Madame Clarissima to enlist her "in a nice little surprise plan."

"The nuns we have at the Aid Rooms," said she, "are most of them from this place, and were pupils of your music teacher, Estelle, who found a home with friends, and has never been in our Rooms. Some of them insist that she perished in the wing basement, others are sure that she recanted, and thus saved her life. I want your help in undeceiving them."

"I will gladly give it," was the ready reply.

"I can tell them what I know," said Grace. "But it will be more appropriate for you to state the facts in the case. They will get strength from hearing your voice witness for the Master."

Madame Clarissima was delighted with the plan, and said, "You are right, dear friend, I should ever be busy in undoing my sad record of false teaching; and it seems to me that the successful secret of this is to show them something better. The bishop says, 'Shed plenty of light, and there is no chance for darkness to flourish.' I will come and do all I can to help strengthen the dear souls."

"You can do them untold good," was the reply. "And if you can induce any others that reside here to come, please bring them," added Grace cordially. "While we welcome our circle of old tried friends, we do not forget, when we make a feast, those we are trying to help, who, from lack of our chances, are spiritually halt, lame and blind."

"All right," replied Madame Clarissima. "I can bring some with me I have no doubt; and it is so nice in you to think of them."

"I could not help thinking of them, when they are on my heart so much," said Grace. "Do you know that Estelle has improved wonderfully since being at the conservatory. I shall give her the first use of my new parlor grand. Come early, please, and we will have the music room open for the reunion of Estelle

and her friends. Be sure and invite Hosea," and she hastened away, full of benevolent plans.

Accordingly, when the evening came, Madame Clarissima was at the Aid Rooms in good season to interview the nuns, and give them a hint of what was coming ; and with her large company, escorted by the bishop, who had joined them, entered Leavenworth Mansion. Estelle appearing at the right moment, led the way to the music room adjoining the parlors. She met the nuns individually with tearful affection, while they fell on her neck and cried for joy to find that she was alive, and they could see her once more.

When the wave of emotion had a little subsided, and quiet was restored, at invitation of Grace, Madame Clarissima rehearsed what had happened in Madonna Hall. She referred to the great work of faith which Hosea had done for years, and acknowledged the Hand of God in raising him up and making him so wise and faithful in the time of great extremity, and giving him such success that not one condemned nun perished. Sister Estelle is here among us alive, well, happy as are many others, because the blessing of the tender and compassionate Saviour attended him," said the lady. "And not a few of you can testify that, under God, you owe your life and liberty to him."

"Yes, yes, we owe our lives to him," said many, with heartfelt gratitude.

“I doubt not that the great work in Madonna Hall commenced with him, and was brought about by his efforts and prayers.” She then related in her fascinating way, her adventure in the Tombs; how she found the Lord there, in her agony, and escaped in answer to prayer; that the bishop and herself had been led out of darkness step by step into the light, and many of the nuns had found peace in believing. “And now,” said she, “what shall we render to the Lord for what He has done for us? He has a work for each one of us to do in owning Him, and in being helpful to others.”

There was not a dry eye in the room, as hushed and reverent they listened to the glowing story of deliverance from the false system that crushes rather than uplifts humanity.

Hosea came in as Madame Clarissima had closed her recital, and greeting them all with grace and ease, took his place beside Estelle, ready to help the singing with his incomparable tenor, greatly to her satisfaction.

Madame Clarissima was radiant, and exclaimed,—

“This is indeed a family gathering, and we are permitted to see great things accomplished in the removal of an evil work. Now, Miss Leavenworth, as is most fitting, let us have a praise service of song.”

“Yes, indeed, let us all sing with heart and voice,” replied Grace, beamingly, as she helped distribute books, and encouraged the more timid.

The folding-doors were open over the house, and as inspiring hymns were sung, and psalms chanted, the burden of the melody was a prophecy of the near triumph of Righteousness.

“The morning light is breaking,”

and other sacred songs, were rendered with rare joy by those who had recently received the peace of God that passeth all understanding.

How vast the difference between the worship of God’s children, in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, and idolatry!

How wide the gulf between this adoration,—

“My faith looks up to Thee,
Thou Lamb of Calvary,
Saviour Divine!”

and the sickening utterances of the singing nuns at a former convent Reception, where Mary the creature was deified, and Christ the Infinite Creator was ignored.

The chanting of God’s Word, how elevating and reverential, as in the sublime words,—

“Who is the King of Glory?
The Lord of Hosts,
He is the King of Glory.”

While the company in the music room were enjoying their musical reunion, the circle of friends in the front parlor, undisturbed, were talking with absorbed

interest of the aggressions of the foreign element that threatens this Government. The evening papers had an item respecting the Anarchists in Chicago, and Bishop Berlin, addressing Colonel Southbury, who sat next him, asked,—

"Do you think, Colonel, that we have reason to fear their movements?"

"They are less united than formerly," was the reply, "and I regard them as far more easily controlled than the Jesuits in our midst. The Society that the easy-going French nation has found it necessary to expel eight times in a little over one hundred years, calls for close watching and severe legislation in our country."

"I think so, decidedly," said Mr. Cameron. "I have recently given attention to their methods of parochial work in their schools."

"I am delighted to hear it," exclaimed Father Williams. "I have long been praying for this day to dawn. The trouble is, the masses have a misplaced confidence, and are ignorant of the true character of the Jesuits. They think them good, when they are very corrupt. What concise work is there that will enlighten them? Every Compendium that I have seen is in the Latin language, locked up for the use of the clergy alone."

"The book you seek is just issued," was the reply. "Professor M. Paul Bert, a wise and brilliant statesman of France, seeing the dangerous blight falling on

society from Jesuits being permitted to instruct youth, translated the leading text book of the Order, 'Gury's Compendium of Moral Theology;' and it has just been reproduced in English in this country."

"Ah, indeed! What effect had this book in France?" asked Madame Du Pont Williams, quite interested.

"A very wonderful effect," replied Mr. Cameron. "This book, with the professor's overpowering speeches before the Chambers of Deputies, caused laws to be made which entirely exclude Jesuits from being the educators of children and youth. The book is a fearless exposure of their antichristian principles, which, under our laws, are the worst of crimes, as lying, stealing, perjury, adultery and murder. It is a most disgusting unveiling of 'The Mystery of Iniquity,' taken under the wing of so-called Moral Theology."

"Why is it necessary to expose this wickedness in a book?" asked Madame Du Pont Williams, appealing to Father Berlin.

"A charge to keep I have,
A God to glorify,"

came floating in from the music room.

"You do well to ask," replied the bishop. "The book was called for to settle the question as to the morality of the Jesuits. Well-informed Protestants have held that they and their principles are execrable. The

papacy, on the other hand, has mostly maintained that their principles are holy, and they are a saintly and God-approved class of men."

"It has been well said," remarked Mr. Cameron, turning to Mrs. Leavenworth, "that the Jesuit degrades everything he touches. Conscience is suppressed, with all holy aspirations. His deep scorn for woman is only matched by that of the heathen, who know not God, with this difference, for the sake of outside influence, for policy and domination, there is a certain pretence on the part of the Jesuits. 'Bear this truth well in mind,' says one of the Order, 'better feel the evil will of a man than the good will of a woman.' 'Women are habitually given to lying,' says the Jesuit. In all their dissertations, their deep scorn for the daughter of Eve, the first corrupter, is often manifested under the most vulgar form.' Woman, under Jesuit rule is kept down and crushed; it is only the religion of Christ that disenthalls her, and gives her her place in the family and society. The professor says, 'Among those that the Jesuits brutify, they themselves may be reckoned in the first line. During three centuries it has often been remarked they have not, in intellectual attainment, produced one man of the first, nor even one of the second rank; but they do not seem to perceive it.'"

"That is not surprising," replied Mrs. Leavenworth. "How can men bound in chains of moral darkness have a clear mental vision? It is ever true that 'a

good understanding have they that keep His commandments.' As to the scorn of a sinful Order of men, it is complimentary and cause of rejoicing. It will be easier to deliver women under their rule, for as soon as the light shines, they will understand, and throw off the yoke.

"The book we are speaking of," resumed the bishop, "being their standard text book of morals, shows just what they are to-day,—the same as they were two hundred years ago, and by their own confession in this work, they must be judged. I have always had a secret horror of their doctrines." Like Lot in Sodom, the bishop had had his righteous soul vexed with their unlawful deeds.

"For my part, I never could understand their reasoning; they twist and mystify so much," remarked Mrs. Du Pont Williams.

"Hard set, those Jesuits!" interjected Mr. Leavenworth.

"I regard the enterprise of the Professor, in bringing before the people proof of what they are," said Mr. Cameron, "as a masterful movement. In consequence of this, the Jesuits in France can not meddle with the instruction of the children and youth, and there is no reason why the same means should not influence public opinion and bring about a similar result here."

"Pity we cannot muster one like him in this country. For these ten years we have been outdone

by the French!" groaned Mr. Leavenworth, in view of the facts that many of our future citizens are being trained to be criminals, and that France has set us a better example.

"The men for the crisis are already here," replied the Colonel, hopefully. "We have many eloquent and strong men awake to the demands of the hour."

"Yes, and the unveiling of the character of the Jesuits gives these men a great advantage. Our country's invaders are at last uncloaked. 'Mystery' is their Bible name, but they are forever uncovered before the astonished gaze of the world. It is useless for those who crystalize around Jesuitism to equivocate or hide behind pious dodges; they are helplessly unmasked, and can no longer conceal their creed from the masses behind a Latin screen; it is translated for the unlearned. As you request, Mr. Leavenworth, I will now read a few points of the Professor's summary of this Compendium."

"By all means, Mr. Cameron; we shall be pleased to hear," was the reply.

Mr. Cameron began,—

"He says, 'The first impression of a lay reader, in looking over a Jesuitical Compendium, is wonder and dread. It pretends to be all,— canon law, civil law, penal, even commercial law, jurisprudence; and, also, divine and human science may be found here. The priest, in the course of his studies, has become thoroughly impregnated with it, carries it with him out of

the seminary, and, with his breviary, catechism and confessor's manual, if he is in the country, it will form all his library; he thinks he has all that is needed to guide his conduct towards men as well as his relations with Heaven. . . . Society can have no hold on him, nor teach him anything; all has been foreseen by his chiefs.

“The layman is struck with the absence of any general principle. In the “Section on Conscience,” there are the definition, the divisions and subdivisions, varying from each other; as much as to say, the true truth, the doubtful truth, and the false truth. The Roman casuist is aiming at destroying all the elevated and holy significance of the word, and he is sure to effect what he seeks.

“The third surprise of the general reader, not used to crookedness, is to find the facility with which, out of an excellent principle, he deduces the most monstrous consequences. The subtle hair-splitting reasoning drifts one away from the solid foundations, and, full of anguish, one is drawn towards a fatal declivity, the tufts of grass tearing off under our crisped hands. It is the strength of the false reasoning casuist, and the *ne plus ultra* of his art; he knows that, at last, tired and bruised, the patient will roll into the abyss.’ The abyss of doubt,” explained Mr. Cameron, “which the tempter brought into Eden. ‘Ye shall not surely,’ being the formula which, persistently followed out, leads to the destruction of all

moral principle. The casuist we are considering fully adopts the tactics of Satan in decrying right and bolstering up wrong doing. Hath God said,—doubting God's Word, he accuses Him of lying,—‘Thou shalt not eat of the fruit?’ Never mind, the fruit is good to make you wise ; doubt, disobey and eat ; you can do it with impunity, with a mental reservation, and say you did not do it.’ Here we have the portraiture of sin, disbelieving, disobeying, ignoring, defying God.”

“Yes,” said Mr. Leavenworth ; “Satan was the father of lies, and of the Order of the Jesuits, his most obedient children.”

“When a guilty man is condemned by the civil law,” continued Mr. Cameron, “the Jesuit strives to find a loop-hole by which he may escape. His code makes people criminals, and he always sides with the sinner. Between the thief and his victim he never hesitates ; he takes the part of the thief, and so of all other crimes. The gist of his Moral Theology is to sin all one can in the circumstances and not be found out. It is as if the writer were such a consummate sinner himself that he thinks the most desirable thing in the universe is to roll sin as a sweet morsel under the tongue in concealment, and at the same time hypocritically appear as an angel of light. It is well that this, their own seminary text book, a work showing exactly what they are, is now in an English dress and is being widely circulated, as their princi

ples have been almost unknown to Protestants in this country, although this text-book, or those akin to it, are in common use in the Jesuit colleges and universities here."

"That is true," replied the Colonel, "and it will be seen that their principles are entirely opposed to the Constitution of the Union, and would, if allowed to work, destroy all domestic propriety and happiness, besides being incredibly cruel and atheistical. Shall such men and books have the making of our future citizens?"

"Never!" replied Bishop Berlin. "We should, in that case, educate only traitors. I remember Bismarck said, on entering Paris, in the late war between Germany and France, that sadder than the scenes of blood on the battle-field, was the finding of false, misleading text-books for the young in Catholic school rooms. In the one case the body was destroyed; in the other, the mind was mutilated, deformed, made wholly unfit for the duties of life. Men who were reared on such poisonous food, learned in the lore of perdition, are at this hour training and overseeing the education of full a half million of this nation's children and youth. We all know that education decides what the individual will be. The bias is given in the early years. Now, friends, this vital matter must be more closely watched. The school books are perverted as much as possible for the young, by these foully-educated Jesuits, whose right

hand is falsehood. And we must remember that this spoliation of many of the nation's youth has been going on, not for days or for a year, but for twenty-five years, ever since the Baltimore Council of 1864, which decreed that every Catholic parish, when able, should have a parochial school. No wonder that statistics show that criminals increase faster in the United States than in any other country, with the exception of Spain, the parochial school graduates being vastly more sure of being criminals than if taught in the public schools.”

“We bemoan the late secession,” added Mr. Cameron, “while in our midst, in every city and large town, we allow nurseries of rebellion; permit children and youth to be taught treason to this Government, and loyalty to the Italian citizen. These schools are every one of them breeding enemies to the Republic, and should be suppressed as in other lands.”

“They should be at once,” echoed the Colonel. “I think it was Chancellor Pasquier who said that ‘there was a deep principle independent of positive laws, which does not allow that a society, whatever it may be, should be consolidated in a state, without the approval of the great powers of the nation.’ At the instigation of the Jesuits, whose history has been that of traitors in every land, serving only themselves and the Pope, I learn that there are military organizations in many of the city parishes of the United

States. In Chicago, it is said, military drilling transpires every Sunday in the vicinity of the corporation churches. The youths being drilled are from ten to sixteen years of age. I am told, on good authority, that, take any Catholic Church you please in the city, and this military drilling will be found going on. It is a fact, that the apostate church under the dictation of foreigners, is drilling its members, middle-aged and young, as if for social war. Was it ever heard that a Protestant denomination was guilty of such a menace to the peace of society as drilling a sect against the Government?"

"Yes," replied Mrs. Leavenworth, "my attention has been called to it, and my whole soul is aroused. Why, in the name of law, order, and patriotism, do not our state and city authorities, and the nation itself, awake and forbid these great bodies of drilled men from marching with arms through our streets at funerals, and numberless processions, when they are not a part of the state militia? What need of Roman military legions if no fighting is in prospect?"

"True, Madame," replied the Colonel; "you do well to inquire into this matter. It is high time that the people and United States Government made investigation, and discerned the character of the military companies that are multiplying in our borders, and under foreign direction are plotting mischief."

The senator paused a moment, as magnificent strains of chanting swept in from the music room,—

"O Lord God of hosts,
Who is a mighty One like Thee, O Lord,
Or to Thy faithfulness round about Thee?
Thou rulest the raging of the sea;
When the waves thereof arise, Thou stillest them."

"Wonderful words!" exclaimed Mr. Cameron, in the interval of silence. "The Lord alone can still the tempest, whether it be ocean billows, or the unrighteous uprising of men. But as good, law-abiding citizens, we are to go forward in the strength of the Infinite One, and save the country that He has given us."

"Yes, by all means," replied the senator; "these conspiracies are under the law, and can be suppressed or banished. Societies disloyal to the Government should at once be made null and void, and all my influence, public and private, shall be enlisted to effect this speedily. With God's blessing, I have great hopes of success, and when this is done, the rebellious schools will be reconstructed and fall into line, even as the once disaffected states returned to the Union. They will, like first class public schools, become nurseries of loyal children and youth, whom their country may some day be delighted to honor."

When the time came for the refreshments to be served, the singing ceased, and Grace invited the

company in the music room to be seated in the parlors, Madame Clarissima and Hosea leading them in. A blessing was invoked on the food by Mr. Cameron, and after general conversation and partaking of the feast, the guests separated at a seasonable hour, inspired with new ardor to work and pray for the peace of the country, and the glory of God.

XXXIII.

Overthrown.

MEANWHILE gentle little Elsaë had become chubby, rosy-cheeked, as playful as a kitten, and the pet of the Leavenworth family. More than birds and flowers she brightened their home, and was so charming in her winsome ways that every one loved her. Mr. Leavenworth called her "Sunbeam," and insisted that she was just like Grace at her age.

As for that young lady, she sought out Anna Stilling, and finding her convalescing, brought her back with her to see her sister Elsaë, lovingly telling her, greatly to her delight, that if she wished, she could live with her and this should be her home. The meeting of the little girls was very touching. Their sorrows and separation had made them dearer than ever to each other, and once together they could not be separated. Since they were cast off by their father, the Leavenworths gladly adopted them and at once made plans for their education. An accom-

plished governess was employed to instruct them in primary studies and in vocal music. This plan was more desirable in Anna's state of health than the excitement of school.

Although Stilling was committed to jail, Buhler and his friends of the "Commission" did not intend that he should remain there. Buhler, hastily leaving his parish in care of another priest, sounded the alarm, and soon Stilling was given bail. When at liberty, with unfailing assurance, he decided to visit Mr. Leavenworth at his office in Glynnboro and learn how much he knew of his affairs, that he might, if possible, artfully regain his lost footing. On reaching the place he found that Mr. Leavenworth and family had removed to Byington Mansion. This was a disappointment, as he had counted on a confidential talk with the old gentleman. Returning to the city, he determined to get an opportunity to see him privately, and work his way back again to influence Miss Grace, from whom, almost simultaneously with his arrest, he had received her engagement ring, without note or comment. It was a daring game, but he deemed the prize worth the venture. He knew better than to show himself in the presence of the family, until he could gloss over his "misfortunes," and excite Mr. Leavenworth's sympathy.

Eagerly seeking to effect his purpose, he was constantly on the alert, stationing himself at his hotel windows, and other points of observation, or walking

down town to the post-office, news-stand, and other places of concourse, during the day, and hovering near the Leavenworth premises in the evening; but his quest was vain. Mr. Leavenworth seemed never to leave the house save in a carriage, with some of the family; and Stilling must have a strictly private interview, unknown to anyone of the household.

He noticed, from day to day, two prettily dressed children in the grounds with their governess, or with Grace. They seemed happy and gleeful, as if tenderly cherished. Who could they be? Some relatives of the family, he concluded. One evening he made an arbor in the Leavenworth grounds his place of watching, with the hope that the old gentleman might take a stroll, and he could gain his ear. He could see that the music room, often used as a home parlor, was brilliantly lighted, and Grace, as lovely as the light, was making herself agreeable to her father and mother and the little girls. Presently the governess came in, and with Grace, played a duet, while the children marched in good time. After this, as the ladies were singing a sweet Scotch air with the piano accompaniment, Anna and Elsae clambered upon the old gentleman's chair, one on each side, and began to curl his hair, while he pretended that he was being very badly treated, although immensely pleased at their frolicsome actions.

It was a sweet home picture, and Stilling gazed with a medley of emotions, most of all wondering who

the children were. He saw when Mr. Cameron called, that they were soon good friends. Interested, anxious, he stealthily stepped upon the veranda for a better view. There was certainly something familiar in the looks and manner of the little ones. He came nearer and beheld his disowned children, where, of all other places, he would not have them sheltered.

This was a death blow to his hopes which he least expected. Bewildered and frantic, as he approached nearer, to fully assure himself that he had made no mistake, as he was short-sighted, inadvertently his face was pressed against the window pane. The children, seeing that dreaded face, screamed with affright: Anna, who had scarcely recovered from her illness, going into convulsions, and Elsaë scampering for dear life to the arms of good Mr. Leavenworth. Mr. Cameron and Grace saw the apparition, which was quickly withdrawn. Mr. and Mrs. Leavenworth, having their faces turned from the windows, saw nothing, and needed to have the alarm of the children explained.

Anna was laid on the sofa, and when she became conscious, cried, "Do n't let him come! Do n't let him take me away!" in the most piteous tones.

"Who is it, darling, that you are afraid of?" asked Mrs. Leavenworth, soothingly taking her hand.

"Wo n't you tell?" she said, with wide-staring eyes. "It's my father; but he made me promise to keep it secret." She was quiet for a few moments, and

then the paroxysm came on again, and she wailed, "Oh, father, father, do n't, do n't?"

"There, there, darling," gently said Grace, stooping to kiss her. "He shall not hurt you. I'll drive him away," and she drew the curtains, and made as if turning out the phantom.

And Stilling, listening in the shadows, heard all.

Little Elsae was at the time snugly held in Mr. Leavenworth's arms, and would at once have regained her roly-poly serenity, had not Anna's hysteria kept her disturbed. Still, although trembling a little, she felt pretty safe, greatly to the old gentleman's delight.

Mr. Cameron stepped out and summoned the man, James, saying distinctly,—

"James, you may look through the grounds. There seems to be some evil disposed person lurking around. If the coast is not clear at once you may unchain Duke."

The watch-dog heard, and seemed to understand as well as James, and commenced growling savagely from his kennel on the other side of the veranda, while the rustling of the foliage, and the sound of rapidly departing feet, witnessed that the word-shot had taken effect.

Soon the doctor appeared, and learning the case, administered the nervine for fright, and with soothing words the dear child fell asleep.

"Worse and worse!" thought Stilling, as he

breathlessly reached his quarters at the hotel. "It seems as if the fates were against me. I defy them to do their worst! Money does wonders in these days. I'll venture that I can get off from the courts by bribery. Those children must come to light in this crisis, to be the last pound on the camel's back! Why was I not acute enough to see that they were hidden in papal care, the only system that can effectually bury the living."

James had sighted Stilling, and following him saw where he roomed, and at once told Mr. Leavenworth, who promptly called on his next-door neighbor, a skilful lawyer friend, with whom he had previously consulted, and asked him to accompany him on a visit to Stilling. The lawyer, who was also a magistrate, was ready for the case in hand, and the two repaired to Stilling's rooms.

Not seeming to notice the pale consternation of Stilling at their sudden appearance, the lawyer quickly made him understand that he was a criminal and a swindler in appropriating to himself the property of his children on false pretences.

At the suggestion of Mr. Leavenworth, the lawyer drew up a writing to the effect that Stilling had made out certificates that both his children were dead, and that he had concealed his oldest daughter in a mill under an assumed name, in order that he might obtain her inheritance. Although he tried evasion, Stilling could not avoid signing the document, and when this was done Mr. Leavenworth said,—

“Now, sir, I have taken pains to inform myself respecting the locality of certain property which you own, and which you must now make over to your children, and reinstate them in their rights, and then you must pay me what you owe me, as I hold your note for two thousand dollars.”

Baffled and overwhelmed, Stilling was speechless, and was obliged to comply with the demands there made, and fully discharge his indebtedness to his children and Mr. Leavenworth.

The two unwelcome callers departed, having accomplished what they wished ; yet the miserable father had not the grace of penitence, and felt not one throb of affection for his children, but was wrathfully angry at being foiled, grinding his teeth and muttering curses as he thought what a large fortune he had lost in Grace and in repaying his children. He determined on going into gambling and rum selling with more vigor than ever, and thus retrieve his broken fortunes. When the Court sat he was on hand, and played the role he had planned, and, finally, through some powerful influence that was brought to bear, he was let off. Possibly the forgery was settled by the “Commission ;” somehow he escaped the penalty of his crime. He was an old offender, and was not afraid of statutes as long as he was identified with a strong monied monopoly that determined to rule or ruin. Notwithstanding all that, he was at length obliged to leave the country for embezzling money placed in

his charge by a syndicate. He was an illustration that "the way of the transgressor is hard;" for, having gambled away all his saloon and other property, and become hopelessly addicted to drink, his sun went down in darkness.

Buhler was later installed in a church in the West. "Two dangerous Jesuits less in the New England States," said those who had watched the want of principle of the Society.

Years pass. Madonna Hall has become famous as the Berlin Collegiate Institute, where many former nuns, as well as other young ladies, have graduated with honors. The bishop is Principal, and his wife, Clarissima, Preceptress. The bishop has suffered "for righteousness sake," as his palace has been appropriated by Archbishop Bland, and he has reason to "rejoice," for those who uphold the cause of the pontiff say "all manner of evil against him, falsely," for Christ's sake. His lovely wife is well educated, in the usual sense of the term, and a fitting companion for her husband. A feature of the school is its decidedly evangelical character. The Bible is an acknowledged text book, on the principle that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and that that fear should be acknowledged, first of all, in systems of education. The Lord Jesus Christ is honored as the Creator and Redeemer. In short, what constitutes a Christian, or believing in Christ, is clearly taught.

One day in the week is given to special study of the Word of God. It is well known that those who are converted among the heathen will not stay converted, or grow in the knowledge of Christ, unless fed on the sincere milk of the Word. No more can Christians here avoid backsliding unless they obey Christ in searching the Scriptures. The Berlin Institute, from its high religious standard, sends out many fervent disciples to witness for Christ and win others to Him. Some are called to go to mission fields, bearing the glad tidings.

Col. Southbury was munificent in his endowment of the school, and it was through his generosity that Estelle was enabled to become thorough in music, as well as perfect herself in an art course. When she had graduated honorably, she was chosen to take charge of music in the Institute.

As the years went by, Mr. Cameron and Grace found that they were more and more necessary to each other, and the sequel was, that they became one in holy bonds, Mr. Leavenworth saying at the wedding. "Now I have a son after my own heart!"

Anna and Elsae, full of exuberant life, were good scholars, and in due time graduated from the Institute, and, later, Anna took a college course. They unconsciously patterned after Grace; were self-governed, reliable, industrious and unselfish. They owed much to their home and school training; were lovely, efficient young ladies, well fitted to do their part in the

world. Anna was ambitious to make her mark as a teacher, and obtained a prominent position in the Ber-jin Institute. Elsaë, more domestic, preferred to stay at home to comfort father and mother, as they called their adopted parents. With her cheery, happy nature, she found full scope for her abilities, as she was helpful in the neighborhood and in benevolent causes ; and, as the old people went down the vale of life, and Grace had a family of her own, they realized, as never before, the great treasures they had in Anna and Elsaë Stilling. Hosea, after a course of study, became a successful and honored evangelist, and is on the best of terms with teacher Estelle.

Father Williams and his good wife went to reside in Paris. Burning with a desire to help in the Mc-All Mission, he found abundant employment in "the white harvest field," and such was his success and the general enthusiasm of the workers, that even Madame Williams forgot her theme of fashion, and for a part of every day busily scattered Testaments and tracts among the people of their vicinity.

"The idea of my doing this !" she said one day to her husband, when she came in glowing with the exercise of the walk. "But it is so natural to imitate those one is with ; all our friends are in this work, and there is nothing I enjoy so much."

Ella Southbury is at her post of worthy endeavor in the Aid Society, useful, placid and happy, doing for others as she would be done by.

Colonel Southbury has his Institution — a breathing place for priests leaving Romanism — in good working order. It is a large, cheery, well-appointed establishment, which he calls “Southbury House,” and is its presiding genius. When a few more Christian millionnaires do likewise, a multitude of the disaffected, truth-convicted clergy of Rome will leave their livings and surroundings for a covert, where, shaking off the shackles of error and superstition, they can think, reason and decide for righteousness and Christ. Southbury House has a good showing of clerical inmates, and they are at once encouraged to search the Word and fit to serve Him who is the only Saviour from sin. Some converted are already in a course of training for preaching the gospel; others choose to study law, or prepare to become Protestant teachers.

Mrs. Byington and Louise are engaged in a promising mission enterprise in Rome, which has a record of wonderful results. Florence Fairfax turned a deaf ear to Mrs. Byington’s advice, and married an Italian infidel, titled, but poor, who admired her for her money. She married in haste, and at last advices was engaged in repenting.

Father Pecci left for Rome, taking Father Krafts with him, and finding that they were treated with indignity when in clerical dress on the streets, that they could not officiate as priests, and the Pope was in too much trouble to help himself even, in their distress became

attired as citizens, and obtained employment as hack drivers, some two hundred of the superfluous clergy being in the same business to earn their livelihood.

As for the Roman power, the disintegration, foretold in the Word of God, goes on. It is "partly strong and partly broken," and will so continue to "the end." But notwithstanding its brittle strength, let all God's children, Protestant and Roman Catholic, in opposing its sinful behests, gird on the whole armor of God. "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in heavenly places." It is the Word of God on which we rely for strength to "hold the fort," until the coming of His Kingdom, for which we earnestly pray. The promise is sure. Christ shall have the victory. "The whole earth shall be filled with His glory as the waters cover the sea."

XXXIV.

Appendix.

MORALITY OF THE JESUITS.

THE principles of the Jesuits are little known in this country; but “they are hostile to all social order, destructive of all domestic decorum and happiness, and incredibly cruel and atheistical.” In 1762 their order was abolished in France, and the arret of the Parliament of Paris states as the ground of the extirpation of the Jesuits, “The consequences of their doctrines destroy the law of nature; break all the bands of civil society, by authorizing theft, lying, perjury, the utmost uncleanness, murder, all criminal passions, and all sins; root out all sentiments of humanity, overthrow all governments, excite rebellion, and extinguish the foundation and practice of religion, and substitute all sorts of superstition, blasphemy, irreligion and idolatry.” The following passages are quoted from some of their most famous authors,—and it may be premised that these are the dogmas ever taught and practiced by the Jesuits, and at every eligible period.

In this republic, the minds and hearts of our citizens are necessarily very sensitive concerning that integrity, which combines honesty and truth, the authority of the statute laws, female purity, and human life.

HONESTY.

1. *Escobar*, Theolog. Moral. Vol. 4. Lib. 34. Sect. 2. Prob. 16, page 348. "A child who serves his father, may secretly purloin as much as his father would have given a stranger for his compensation."

2. *Cardenas*, Crisis Theolog. Diss. 23, Cap. 2. Art. 1, page 474. "Servants may secretly steal from their masters as much as they judge their labor is worth more than the wages which they receive." To this agrees *Taberna*.

3. *Tamburinus*, Explic. Decal. Lib. 8. Tract 2. Cap. 3. page 205. "A man is not bound to restore what he has stolen in small sums, however large may be the total."

4. *Gordonus*, Theolog. Moral. Univ. Lib. 5, Quest. 3. Cap. 4. page 826. "A woman may take the property of her husband, to supply her spiritual wants, and to *act like other women*." In plain English, wives and daughters may steal from their husbands and fathers, to satisfy their Confessor Priest.

TRUTH.

1. *Suarez*, Jur. Precept. Lib. 3. Cap. 9. Asser. 2. page 473. "If anyone has promised or contracted without intention to promise, and is called upon oath

to answer, he may simply answer, no; and he may swear to this denial by secretly understanding that he did not sincerely promise, or that he promised without any intention to acknowledge it."

2. *Filiucius*, Quest. Moral. Vol. 2. Tract 25. Cap. 11. Num. 328. "With what precautions may we equivocate? By intending to use only material words. A person may begin to say, 'I swear,' he can add this mental restriction, 'to-day,' or in a whisper he may repeat, 'I say,' and then resume his former tone — 'I did not do it.'" This is telling the truth!

3. *Charli*, Prop. 6. page 8. "He who is not bound to state the truth before swearing is not bound by his oath, provided he makes the internal restriction that excludes the present case."

4. *Taberna*, Vol. 2. Pars. 2. Tract 2. Cap. 31. page 280. "Is a witness bound to declare the truth before a lawful Judge? No; if his deposition will injure himself or his posterity; or, if he be a priest, for a priest cannot be forced to testify before a secular Judge."

5. *Tamburinus*, Lib. 3. Cap. 4. Sec. 2. page 27. "If any man conceals another's property, for the support of himself and his family, when asked, he may say that he has concealed nothing."

AUTHORITY OF THE LAWS.

1. *Bellarmin*, Controvers. Lib. 5. Cap. 6. page 1090. "The spiritual power must rule the temporal

by all sorts of means and expedients when necessary. Christians should not tolerate a heretic king."

2. *Salmeron*, Comment. Evan. Hist. Vol. 4. Pars.
3. Tract 4, page 411. "The Pope hath supreme power over the whole earth, over all kinds and governments, to command and enforce them, to employ their power to promulgate Popery, which mandate of the Pope they are bound to obey, and if they resist he must punish them as contumacious."

HOMICIDE.

1. *Ariault*, Cens. page 319. "If a person attempts to ruin my reputation by calumny, and I can avoid the injury only by secretly killing him, may I do it? Certainly. Although the facts are true; yet if the calumniator will not cease to publish them, you may fitly kill him, not publicly, but in secret, to avoid scandal."

2. *Escobar*, Vol. 6. page 170. "Not only is it lawful to offer or accept a duel, but you may secretly kill a calumniator, if you have no other mode to avoid the danger, because it is not murder, but self-defense. You are obliged to refuse a duel, if you can secretly kill your enemy; because thereby you endanger not your own life, and you also hinder the commission of a new sin in offering or accepting a duel."

3. *Guimenius*, Prop. 7. page 86. "You may charge your opponent with false crimes to take away his credit, as well as kill him."

4. *Dicastillo*, Lib. 2. Tract 1. Disput. 10. Dub. 1. Num. 15. page 290. "If a man becomes a nuisance to society, the son may lawfully kill his father."

5. *Escobar*, Theolog. Moral. Vol. 4. Lib. 31. Sec. 2. Precept. 4. Prob. 5. page 329. "Children are obliged to denounce their parents or relations who are guilty of heresy, although they know that they will be burnt. They may refuse all nourishment and permit them to die with hunger, or may kill them as enemies who violate the rights of humanity."

CONCERNING PURGATORY.

Says the catechism of the Council of Trent, "The fire of purgatory: in which the souls of just men are cleansed by a temporary punishment, in order to be admitted into their eternal country, into which nothing defiled entereth."

Again, "The holy synod (Council of Trent) commands the bishops diligently to strive that the wholesome doctrine of purgatory, handed down by venerable fathers and holy counsels, be believed by Christ's faithful, held, taught, and everywhere preached."

"Q. In what cases do souls go to purgatory?"

"A. Souls go to purgatory when they die in less sins, which we call venial, or when they have not satisfied the justice of God for former transgressions" (General Catechism, p. 518).

"Roman Catholic theologians, though agreed as to the existence of purgatory, differ as to its situation

and the nature of its punishments. The pains of purification in purgatory have been represented as so horribly severe that no sufferings ever borne in this world can be compared with them. How long they continue is unknown ; but the process of cleansing is thought to be very gradual, and, in some cases, not to be completed till the day of judgment " (Romanism As It Is, p. 525-6).

MEXICAN MUMMIES.

"In 1857, at the time of the Mexican Revolution, the Papal Inquisition, which had long existed in Mexico and Puebla, was given into the hands of the people, who for the first time had the privilege of freely entering its portals, and searching there for friends who had from time to time mysteriously disappeared. In the city of Mexico the people ransacked the place, but could not find what they sought.

"After considerable investigation some one pointed out that the walls of the building seemed very thick. They then commenced beating upon them, and found that in certain places they were hollow. They broke into them, and from those whited sepulchres, filled with dead men's bones, they drew out men in their clothing, dead, dried up, perished.

"And lest this awful revelation should sometime be forgotten, doubted and denied, as so many others have been, they sent for an artist, placed those dead bodies in position, and had them photographed. One

of those pictures, taken in the city of Mexico, came into my possession, and from that picture, painted by the sun which has no prejudices, and tells no lies, a copy was also made by the sun, untouched by any human hands, and we are thus enabled to cast upon the screen a picture, not of Egyptian mummies of ages gone by, preserved with sacred care by heathen priests, but a picture of the mummies of the nineteenth century, taken from the dungeons of the Papal Inquisition.

“Is it strange that a universal, infallible, unchangeable organization, which has such a past record, and hides such skeletons as these in her closets, is very careful what kind of history the children study in the public schools of America ?

“A life-long friend of the writer, who has spent years in Mexico, writes from there, under date of Nov. 7, 1888, ‘Mr. C—— L—— told me yesterday, that while rebuilding or fitting up the part of the Inquisition purchased by Bishop Simpson in Puebla, they discovered a door which opened into a series of cells some six or seven feet high, and about three feet wide and seven feet long, several of them containing stone benches. The front wall of these was of rock, seven feet thick, with a hole six by seven inches. In these rooms were found some twenty-one skulls and skeletons. They had no photograph taken ; but thirteen cart-loads of bones were carried away, and the earth of which they made mortar for the building

was largely made up of dust of bones. Whose bones they were is a question not easily answered. Mr. D——, who lived in the house for some time, thought there were other walls there which, if broken, might tell tales. I have seen, in a glass case in the museum in Mexico, some skeletons said to have been taken from the Inquisition, but I do not know that they have been photographed. I have asked some friends to try to find out, but get no answers as yet.' The Inquisition in Mexico was taken some years ago for a medical college. Some one has said that now they cut up bodies there to learn to cure diseases, and not to kill heresies, as they used to do. The spirit of the Inquisition still lives" (*The Christian*).

INDULGENCES.

The Council of Trent passed the following decree in respect to Indulgences,—

The holy synod teaches and enjoins that the use of Indulgences, especially salutary to Christian people, and approved by the authority of holy councils, is to be retained in the church; and it anathematizes those who either assert that they are useless, or deny that the power of granting them is in the Church. (Extract from Decrees of Council of Trent.)

The *Catholic Standard*, speaking of the Pope's Encyclical of Indulgence, says,—

His paternal heart overflows with gratitude and charity, and in the exercise of his power as Sovereign Pontiff of the Church, he has recourse to "the infinite fulness of spiritual treasures" which it is for

him to dispense, and has granted to the faithful who approach the Sacraments on next Sunday, September 30, and pray for the souls in purgatory, a Plenary Indulgence* to be applied to these souls. This is an inestimable favor which the faithful members of the Church cannot appreciate too highly, and which they should all most gladly and devoutly avail themselves of. "It is a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead that they may be loosed from their sins" (2 Mac. 12: 46). Many, too, of the faithful have dearly beloved relatives and friends whom they may thus benefit by availing themselves of the great privilege granted them by our Holy Father, the Sovereign Pontiff of the Church.

Rev. James M. King, D. D., of New York, says, "The peril arising from this hostile attitude of the Roman Church toward the public schools, reveals itself in the inferior character of the instruction given by the Roman Catholic church schools, producing illiterates, paupers and criminals. A table made from the census of 1870 showed that there were furnished to every ten thousand inhabitants,—

	Illiterates,	Paupers.	Criminals.
"Roman Catholic schools,	1400	410	160
"Public schools of 21 states,	350	170	75
"Public schools of Massachusetts,	71	69	11

"It was also shown that in the State of New York the Roman Catholic parochial school system turned out three and a half times as many paupers as the public school system. Dr. Orestes A. Brownson said of the Roman Catholic schools (*Brownson's Review*), "They practically fail to recognize human progress.

* Plenary Indulgence — that which remits all the temporal punishment due for sin.—*Collot's Catechism.*

. . . They do not educate their pupils to be at home and at their ease in their own age and country, or train them to be living, thinking, energetic men . . . They who are educated in our schools seem misplaced and mistimed in the world, as if born and educated for a world that had ceased to exist. . . . The cause of the failure of what we call Catholic education is, in our judgment, in the fact that we educate, not for the present or the future, but for the past. . . . An order of things which the world has left behind, for it could be reproduced, if at all, only by a second childhood.' ”

IN PERIL FROM ROMANISM.

The following extracts are from *Our Country*, —

“ Let us compare some of the fundamental principles of our Government with those of the Catholic Church. The Constitution of the United States guarantees liberty of conscience. Nothing is dearer or more fundamental. Pope Pius IX., in his Encyclical Letter of Aug. 15th, 1854, said, ‘ The absurd and erroneous doctrines or ravings in defense of liberty of conscience are a most pestilential error,— a pest of all others most to be dreaded in a state.’ The same Pope, in his Encyclical Letter of Dec. 8th, 1864, anathematized ‘ those who assert the liberty of conscience and of religious worship,’ also ‘ all such as maintain that the Church may not employ force.’ ”

“ The pacific tone of Rome in the United States does

not imply a change of heart. She is tolerant where she is helpless. Says Bishop O'Conner, 'Religious liberty is merely endured until the opposite can be carried into effect without peril to the Catholic world.' The Archbishop of St. Louis once said, 'Heresy and unbelief are crimes; and in Christian countries, as in Italy or Spain, for instance, where all the people are Catholics, and where the Catholic religion is an essential part of the law of the land, they are punished as other crimes.' In the same strain *The Boston Pilot*, 'No good Government can exist without religion, and there can be no religion without an Inquisition, which is wisely designed for the promotion and protection of the true faith.' The following is from *The Rambler*, a Catholic paper of London, 'Religious liberty, in the sense of a liberty possessed by every man to choose his religion, is one of the most wicked delusions ever foisted upon this age by the father of all deceit. No man has a right to choose his religion.'

"Another foundation stone of our free institutions is free speech and a free press. But in his Encyclical Letter of Dec. 8th, 1864, Pius IX. anathematized 'all who maintain the liberty of the press,' and 'all advocates of the liberty of speech.' He calls it the 'liberty of perdition.'

"Again, free schools are one of the corner-stones of our Government. Catholic opposition to our public-school system is general and well known. Says a

Papal Encyclical, ' XLV. -- The Romish church has a right to interfere in the discipline of the public schools, and in the arrangement of the studies of the public schools, and in the choice of the teachers for these schools. XLVII. — Public schools open to all children for the education of the young should be under the control of the Romish Church, and should not be subject to the civil power, nor made to conform to the opinions of the age.'

“ Rome has never favored the education of the masses. In her relations to them she has adhered to her own proverb, ‘ Ignorance is the mother of devotion.’ In Protestant countries, like Germany and the United States, where there is a strong sentiment in favor of popular education, she has been compelled in self-defense to open schools of her own. But her real attitude toward the education of the masses should be inferred from her course in those countries where she has, or has had, undisputed sway ; and there she has kept the people in besotted ignorance. Instance her own Italy, where seventy-three per cent. of the population are illiterate, or Spain, where we find eighty per cent., or Mexico, where ninety-three per cent. belong to this class.

“ Again, our Constitution requires obedience to the laws of the United States and loyalty to the Government. The Pope also demands of every subject obedience and loyalty to himself. In an Encyclical he says, ‘ XIX. — The Romish Church has a right to

exercise its authority without any limits set to it by the civil power. XXVII.—The Pope and the priests ought to have dominion over the temporal affairs. XXX.—The Romish Church and her ecclesiastics have a right to immunity from civil law. XLII.—In case of conflict between the ecclesiastical and civil powers, the ecclesiastical powers ought to prevail.'

"Of the utter degradation of reason, and the stifling of conscience, the teaching of Cardinal Bellarmine affords a good example: If the Pope should err by enjoining vices or forbidding virtues, the Church would be obliged to believe vices to be good and virtues bad, unless it would sin against conscience.'

"Our brief examination of the underlying principles of Romanism almost renders superfluous any consideration of its attitude toward our free institutions. If alive, it must necessarily be aggressive; and it is alive. Cardinal Manning advises Romanists throughout the world to enter politics as Romanists, and to do this especially in England and the United States.

"Here are some predictions: 'The man is living to-day who will see a majority of the people of the American continent Roman Catholics' (*Boston Pilot*). 'Effectual plans are in operation to give us the complete victory over Protestantism' (A former bishop of Cincinnati). 'Within thirty years the Protestant heresy will come to an end' (Bishop of

Charleston). These utterances are quite worthless as prophecies, but are valuable as confessions.

“But notwithstanding the great losses thus sustained by Romanism in the United States, it is growing with great rapidity. In 1800 the Catholic population was 100,000. In 1884, according to official statistics it was 6,628,176. At the beginning of the century there was one Catholic to every 53 of the whole population; in 1850, one to 14.3; in 1870, one to 8.3; in 1880, one to 7.7. Thus it appears that, wonderful as the growth of our population has been since 1880, the growth of the Catholic Church has been much more rapid.

“Examination shows that the growth of the Catholic Church corresponds closely with that of the foreign population, but is somewhat more rapid. Since 1880 there has been a marked increase in the Catholic population. The average annual growth of the latter from 1870 to 1880 was 176,733, while from 1883 to 1884, it was 231,322.

“Lafayette, himself a Romanist, was not wholly blind when he said, ‘If the liberties of the American people are ever destroyed, they will fall by the hands of the Romish clergy.’”

JESUITS IN AMERICA.

It is no unusual thing to see after the name of a Roman Catholic ecclesiastic the letters “S. J.,” which signify that he is a Jesuit, or member of the so-called “Society of Jesus.”

This society, founded by Ignatius Loyola, August 15th, 1534; conditionally sanctioned by the bull of Pope Paul III. September 25th, 1540; unconditionally approved by him in 1543; and sending out its missionaries and establishing its agencies and college in Spain in 1546, Japan in 1549, Abyssinia in 1557, England in 1580, China in 1584, and in America and Asia before 1556; has had a most troubled existence, and has in some way succeeded in winning a vast amount of ill-will of both rulers and people.

For their crimes, intrigues, and conspiracies, the Jesuits have been banished from various countries again and again, as will be seen by the following table, compiled from "A Short Sketch of the Jesuits," also from the "Encyclopædia of Chronology," by B. B. Woodward and Wm. L. R. Cates, and from other trustworthy authorities. The Jesuits were expelled from Sargossa in 1555, Vienna in 1566, Antwerp and Portugal, in 1578, England in 1579, 1581, 1584, 1586, Japan in 1587, Hungary and Transylvania in 1588, France in 1594, Holland in 1596, Tournon and Berne in 1597, England again in 1602, 1604, Denmark in 1606, Venice in 1612, Amura, Japan, in 1613, Bohemia in 1618, Moravia in 1619, Naples and Netherlands in 1622, China and India in 1623, Turkey in 1628, Abyssinia in 1632, Russia in 1723, Savoy in 1724, Paraguay in 1733, Portugal in 1759, France in 1764, Spain in 1767, Russia in 1776, France again in 1804, Belgium in 1818, Brest (by the people) in

1819, Russia again in 1820, Spain again in 1820, Rouen Cathedral, by people, in 1825, Belgium schools in 1826, Great Britain and Ireland in 1829, France again in 1831, Portugal in 1834, Spain again in 1835, Rheims (by the people) in 1838, Lucerne again in 1845, France again in 1845, Switzerland in 1847, Bavaria and Genoa in 1848, Sicily again in 1860, Spain again in 1868, Guatemala in 1871, Switzerland in 1871, German Empire in 1872, France again in 1880.

These are the gentlemen, polite, polished, and trained, the spies, the vassals, the sworn minions of a foreign despot, who, having been driven out of all Catholic countries again and again by popes, princes and kings, both Catholic and Protestant, now swarm into England and America, and under the protection which the influence of an open Bible gives to honest men, are proceeding to destroy the public schools, debauch the Government, and work the mischief which has ever been their legitimate business.

EXTRACT FROM OPEN LETTER OF COMMITTEE OF ONE HUNDRED.

The Boston Committee of One Hundred have addressed an open letter to the friends of free schools and American liberties, in which they have set forth the true attitude of Rome on these subjects. We make the following quotations,—

We charge the Papal hierarchy with hostility to our American liberties, and with seeking to supplant these with the spirit of servile obedience to the Pope of Rome. Pope Pius IX., in his address on the

affairs of the Republic of New Granada, says there should be "no free education, no freedom of worship, no freedom of the press. These, and kindred liberties, in his Encyclical and Syllabus of 1864, he stigmatizes as "the liberty of perdition," as "impious, absurd and erroneous doctrines," as "detestable sentiments, pregnant with the most deplorable evils, and pests of all others most to be dreaded in a state," and with Gregory XVI. calls upon "God to arise and repress, confound, and annihilate this unbridled license." With such hostility to our liberties proclaimed by the head of the Papal hierarchy, is it to be wondered that American organs of Rome should exclaim in terms similar to that used by the *Shepherd of the Valley*, the official Journal of the Bishop of St. Louis, in its issue of Nov. 23, 1851, "If Catholics ever gain a sufficient numerical majority in this country, religious freedom is at an end, so our enemies say, so we believe," or that the *Freeman's Journal*, the organ of Archbishop Hughes, should say in its issue of January 26, 1852, "No man has a right to choose his religion." The right to do so, Pope Pius IX. declares to be a false and monstrous error, and Pope Leo XIII. in his Encyclical of June, 1888, most emphatically condemns it, and calls it "a degradation of liberty."

Dr. McGlynn said, in a recent address, —

If I could reach the mind and the heart of the whole of the American people — if I could reach them as a political and social community — I would say, Cherish your public schools; listen not to their enemies, no matter whence they come. Make them as complete and perfect as you can. Show no favor to any rival system. If you will not exercise the right, if you will not assume the right to forbid rival systems altogether, at least do not be guilty of the incredible folly of nursing and fostering and actually, by appropriations and tax exemptions, encouraging rival systems. The rival systems, as a rule, are promoted by those who are not friendly to your institutions, by those who, educated in foreign lands, or educated here in the spirit of foreign lands, are but half Republican or but half Democratic. Never be guilty of the folly of dividing your school fund among the various churches and sects. You, in such a case, would be guilty of

destroying one of the greatest and most potent instruments for building up and maintaining one great, free, common nationality. And I will go further and say that, so far from favoring these institutions you should rather discredit them as rivals to your magnificent public school system. Insist that they shall come up to a certain standard of education, which you have the right to expect, or that they shall not exist at all.

Oh, American people, protect the poorest, the weakest of the children of the nation—the children of the poor, the children of the emigrant—from the cruel injustice that is being done to them by their parents under the coercion of the Church. What is this injustice? They are being deprived of the magnificent advantages of a common school education. They are compelled to do with the utterly inferior so-called education that is given in these sham parochial schools. A large part of the zeal for maintaining these separate church schools comes not merely from the narrowness, the bigotry of sectionalism, but it comes also from the clannishness of foreign nationalities that wish to perpetuate themselves here as if in hostility to our American nationality.

Don't be so foolish, oh, American people, as to tolerate such an attempt against the unity of our nation. You have the right—I say you have the duty—to insist that the people of this country, the children born in this country, and those who would exercise the right of suffrage in this country, shall speak the language of the country.

But this is enough to show the spirit of Rome. To be forewarned is to be forearmed.

The nun of Kenmare exclaimed, as if she would sound a clarion note of warning, “It is time for the Roman Catholic Church to *awake from their slumbers*, and see themselves as God sees them. It is time that they take the bandage from their eyes, and the deafness from their ears.”

Again, “Those who are determined to sin, will find

excuse for sinning. Men who are determined to uphold and support evil, must have some excuse to do so." This in connection with the fact that this church always persecutes its most self-denying, godly members. She says, I know how difficult it will be for Roman Catholics to realize the fact, but it is a fact all the same. Just as difficult as it is for them to believe that there have been wicked popes,—yes, and popes whose lives were so awful, so vile, that even the worst which Catholic historians can say of Henry VIII. is as purity itself, compared with their record. The disgrace of certain members of the Roman Catholic Church is this, that all this evil is condoned, glossed over and justified. It is a poor religion indeed, that which is afraid that its followers should know its history. It is a poor religion indeed, that which fears that men should seek to know and reason for themselves."

Again she says, "There is a Latin proverb which means that whom the gods wish to destroy they first make demented. In other words, if people do not wish to do right, God allows them to be blinded so that they may think they are serving God, when they are really helping the devil."

Again, "What a revelation there will be at the last great day, when all hidden things are known."

There are in the United States more than 8,000 priests, and one-fourth of them are members of orders anti-American-Jesuits, Dominicans and Franciscans.

These orders, through all their history, have been subject to the Pope of Rome more than to the Government of the countries that have sheltered them, or even to the God of Heaven. The first of these orders is simply a political lobbying machine run in the interest of the man in the Vatican.

The gravest charge against the priesthood is that of unfaithfulness to their vows of chastity. As confessor, the priest possesses the secret of a woman's soul; he knows every half-formed hope, every dim desire, every thwarted feeling. The priest animates that woman with his own ideas, moves her with his own will, fashions her according to his own fancy. And this priest is doomed to celibacy. He is a man. If he is without fault, he makes desperate use of his power. He has to struggle with his passions, and there is a perilous chance of his being defeated in that struggle. The woman is wax in his hands; she has ceased to be a person and is become a thing. The priest is the cause of all this, and is a plague.

OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

In his sermon on Fast Day Dr. Phillips Brooks said, "Build upon the necessity of the education of those who are to be our citizens, members of the State, we must insist always upon freedom, upon releasing from every outside control, upon the most abundant intelligence, upon responsibility to that which is their legitimate master, the State in which

they stand. These are our duties, as concerns them in every attack that may be made upon them, in every effort that may be made to draw away the children under their charge. Let us remember that in them our State has incorporated her best and constant idea of what education of the citizen ought to be, and while we have no right to say that in them, and in them alone, shall the training of our children take place, we surely have a right — and it is a right to be insisted upon — that for them alone shall the State be responsible in any maintenance of their system, in any sustaining of their life ; and that in every sustaining of their life, in every education that goes on outside them, there shall be furnished to those who are to be citizens of the State that training in freedom, intelligence and responsibility which the State requires as its life.

CONCERNING THE POWER OF THE BISHOPS.

Rev. Charles Chiniquy of St. Anne, Kankakee Co., Ill., who, with many French Canadians of his former flock, had left the Roman church, said, in 1859,—

“We began our struggles with the Church of Rome by resisting the abominable abuses of her bishops. A church built by the French Canadians for their own use, and a parsonage erectéd by them for their priest, had been transferred from their hands to another congregation without their permission, and sold, and the money pocketed by the holy ambassadors of Rome.

And when we went to ask the bishop in a respectful way by what authority he had done all these things, he dismissed my countrymen with these words, 'French Canadians, you do not know your religion. If you knew it, you would acknowledge that I have the right to sell your churches and church property, and pocket the money, and go and eat and drink it where I like!'" (Fifty Years in Rome).

Invested with mitre, crosier and staff of office, a "consecrated" bishop has great authority. He has the management of all the church property in his diocese, and the oversight of all ecclesiastical institutions. A bishop cannot be consecrated more than once, and cannot be deposed, as it is supposed that the order cannot be taken from him. He may, however, be deprived. He may also resign his See, or may be translated from one See to another (Barnum's "Romanism As It Is").

PAROCHIAL SCHOOLS.

Parochial schools have been abolished by Catholics in Mexico, Chili and the Argentine Republic. This last is the United States of South America, and might well bear this name. It is free from the Pope and priests, and is the most progressive of South American countries. Says the noted Christian orator of Boston,—

"Let Quebec province cease to imitate Ecuador and take lessons from Chili, Uruguay and the Argen-

tine Republic. Let Boston and New York, Baltimore and Washington, study the example of Mexico, Montevideo and Buenos Ayres. In these strategic instances of reform in Catholic countries, American liberties have been asserted by Catholics themselves against the power of the Pope. The extraordinary success of this independent policy in South America ought to make it a political fashion for the whole Catholic world. Let Protestants of North America study their duties in the light of the actions of Catholics of South America, who have abolished Romish parochial schools and expelled Jesuits from all places of political and educational influence."

AN INSIDE VIEW — THE PAPACY: A REVELATION
AND A PROPHECY.

The following extracts are from "The Papacy" in *The Contemporary Review* for August, 1889, —

"On the centenary of the fall of the Bastille,' writes a Romish prelate, 'the Parisian mob required the proprietor of the cafe Imolfi on the Rue Royal to decorate his premises, a resort famous for its ices. He so far forgot himself as to hoist the Italian flag. In a twinkling the cafe and its contents were flung into the gutter, and the proprietor fled for his life to the police.' This incident was noted largely throughout Europe, most of all in the Eternal City. The Quirinal which flaunts the Italian flag before the gates of the Vatican, represents the material force of a united

nation, while the Pope in his palace prison is as powerless as was the cafe proprietor of the Rue Royal when beset by the mob. Should a collision come, his only thought must be of flight. If the Pope had authority, he would have arrested or avenged the ceremony in honor of Giordano Bruno six weeks before. No incident of late years has so deeply wounded the rulers of the church as the unveiling of the Bruno monument on June 9. The Inquisition burned Bruno in 1600; but instead of wisely ignoring the late tribute to his memory, the Pentecostal festival at the Vatican was clouded by a gloom that could be felt; the whole church must share in the indignation of the Pope, and understand that the iron had entered his soul.

“The Roman Pontiff clings to Rome. If obliged to leave, he hopes some day the sky will clear, and he will reoccupy the See of St. Peter.

“The Pope plaintively told Cardinal McCabe, in 1882, that ‘the condition of Ireland gave him more anxiety than comfort.’ However infallible he may be in faith and morals; in dealing with the Irish question he is like all the rest of us, as a child groping in the dark. He can only act upon information received, and is never infallibly informed. The revelation of which the prelate speaks, is the great blunder the Pope made in regard to the Persico mission to Ireland, in issuing ‘prematurely and against all rule of statesmanship, his famous Rescript before he had received

the report of his messenger, Monsignor Persico, and thus fatally disgusting the Irish, who very naturally blamed Persico instead of the Pope.' 'After the Rescript,' says the prelate, 'the Pope hurried out of the Irish bog by a conciliating message. The successor of the fisherman will have learnt an invaluable lesson, if in future he refuses, being in Italy, to interfere with the man at the helm in Ireland. It is not enough to have your head in the clouds, you must have your feet planted on solid facts.

" 'The Pope's ideal, that of guiding the conscience of all people, is admirable, but it requires omniscience for its realization. He will have to shake himself free from the influences of the Vatican. The allowance of a larger liberty to the local churches in all matters, social and political, is indispensable to the requirements of the human race. We stand at the dawn of a new epoch, as momentous as when the Northern tribes fell upon and destroyed the old empire of Rome. The world is passing into the hands of the English-speaking races. English ideas, English laws, English civilization are becoming as universal as the English speech. Alone among the nations, the English have escaped the curse of universal military service. Alone among the nations they have learned to combine liberty and law, and to preserve an empire by timely concession of self-government. The future of the world is English.

" 'Liberty and local self government will never get a

chance to be worked into the bones and marrow of the Catholic Church, until we have a Pope who thinks English.'

"In conclusion, the prelate says, 'It may be that the church of Rome has played her part in the affairs of men, and that in the new English-speaking era, on the threshold of which mankind is standing, there may be no more than a niche in the Roman museum for the successor of Hildebrand. But if the Pope has any substance of truth, then, as certainly as it was necessary for persecution to arise to scatter the first Christians from Jerusalem, not less certainly shall we see, in a few years, or even it may be in a few months, the breaking of a storm which will compel the Pope to fly from the Eternal City never to return.'"



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